

SURVIVOR PARISH – REALITY PROGRAMMING FOR A SHRINKING CHURCH

By

David L. Madsen

A DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

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## ABSTRACT

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A congregation may not be technically ‘self-supporting’, but can be ‘sustainable’ or viable if it has been organized and trained to ensure its ability to meet financial, fellowship and ministry obligations. Sacramental duties may be served by part-time, shared or volunteer clergy, while the members themselves can be organized and trained to fulfill the non-sacramental ministry, those aspects of pastoral care and support for one another (‘fellowship’) not requiring ordination. Members can also be organized and trained to develop and carry out a plan to meet financial obligations that includes not only giving from members but other potential funding resources, including diocesan and foundation grants, income from interest on an endowment or from ministry/service initiatives within the community.

I believe a church operating under such a model is far less vulnerable to the threat of closure, and is better situated for growth.

This project focused on helping the congregation of St. John the Evangelist understand and embrace such a congregational ministry paradigm. They have lived under a clergy ministry paradigm for many years, but can no longer afford full time clergy. Their community and congregation are declining in finances and numbers as the average age of residents/members increases. They are unlikely in the near future to be able to draw sufficient new attenders to build their membership and financial base to continue that paradigm, and thus avoid the risk of closure.

Three methodologies were used to present this new ministry paradigm to the church:

1. Build a Scriptural Foundation - I laid a strong scriptural foundation for this new paradigm through sermons, bible studies, newsletter articles and personal conversations
2. Develop Appropriate Infrastructure - I worked with the vestry to reorganize the committee structure of the church, including necessary adjustment to the bylaws, in order to ensure that all areas of congregational ministry were served by a functioning committee with a clear mission, and whose leadership rotates regularly,
3. Provide Opportunities for Transformational Experience – I developed a 6-week course, *Imani*, designed to open people's minds to:
  - new ways of doing church
  - new opportunities of partnership in ministry

With those two ultimate objectives in mind—new ways of doing church and new opportunities for partnership, strategies and methodologies evolved throughout the project. My positive findings both convince and encourage me that without providing opportunities for transformational experiences, depending on structure and teaching alone will not produce the necessary changes that will make true sustainability possible

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE SETTING**

#### **HISTORY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH**

The people of St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Church in Essington, Pennsylvania have always valued the history of the church and the island, and see themselves as integrally connected to both. St. John the Evangelist Church (SJEC) traces their beginnings to 1902. Prior to this time the ministry was a Seamen's Mission outpost to seafarers, as Tunica Island used to be a major port of entry. Part of the church building—where the first service was held in 1902—was in the mission building that was started by Seamen's Institute in the late 1800's. That building is still standing, and it is now the educational wing of the church. The sanctuary of the church was begun in 1926.



**Figure 1 Source unknown. "First meeting of the Mission of St. John the Evangelist, Essington PA" (1902)**

In the early 1970's a memorial stained glass window of that first meeting in the humble Seaman's library was commissioned, and installed in the altar area of the new church building which was completed in 1930. At the same time, on the opposite side of the altar, a window was installed memorializing the first church on the island, built by the first Swedish settlers in 1648.



Figure 2 Willet Windows, "The Church of St. John the Evangelist" and "The First Church on Tinicum Island" (1970)

SJEC has never been a large parish. The nave was built to seat approximately 100. The building includes a full undercroft meeting and lunchroom, with a professional kitchen. The kitchen is heavily utilized with wonderful coffee hours and dinners, both for the church and for outreach ministries. SJEC is primarily a working class community, and the endowment fund is modest.



One of the significant characteristics of the history of the congregation has been that a number of the priests who have served SJEC in the past, even those of commendable moral character, have tended to take control of the life of the church and all the activities of the church themselves, without allowing or encouraging others to take initiative. This clericalism can be traced back to a pattern of training that many priests, including myself, have received in Episcopal seminaries. There is a tradition in the Episcopal Church that sees ministry from the top down and not from the bottom up. This is changing in some places, but the results of this long-held philosophy can be seen in much of Episcopal training of leaders. SJEC is certainly not alone in having been formed and informed by that tradition.

#### **GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING**

SJEC is located near the Philadelphia International Airport, outside the Philadelphia city limits. The church is actually on land that was an island, before the construction of Interstate 95 filled in the swamp land and river on the western edge of ‘Tinicum Island’. In fact, much of the island and the surrounding area is a protected wetlands nature refuge.

The church identifies strongly with the island, and expresses support for community life and activity on the island. Many people raised on Tinicum refuse to take offense when they are referred to by some outsiders as ‘swamp rats’, but, doggedly choose to consider it a compliment. They love their little island home. However, this strength of their sense of identity as ‘island people’ may also be the biggest liability for the members of the church and community. The term ‘island mentality’ applies here. It means that people on this island often feel somewhat isolated (or insulated!) from the rest of the world.

Dialogue Narrative #1 Overheard during coffee hour, after a sermon encouraging the congregation to reach out in ministry and fellowship beyond its own community.

An older, long-time member noted pointedly, “Time was, years ago, when little St. John’s of Essington didn’t much concern itself with what anybody else was doing. We were content with our own business.”

Some would still like to keep it that way. SJEC is fairly self-centered in its understanding of needs and ministry that do not in some way affect the island. SJEC needs to be challenged to expand concerns beyond the island. At the same time however, they need to focus even more on the real needs of this community (not just the church), and what SJEC could do to be of greater service to the community. I confess that this is my own analysis, which may or may not be in agreement with the entire congregation, but I believe that my focus on mutual ministry will take them beyond their parochial interests.

## **VARIOUS CONTEXTS**

### **CONTEXT WITHIN THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PENNSYLVANIA**

In the past few years, the church has been forced to learn to function without the leadership of a full time priest, because they can no longer afford one. As a result of being served by part time interim clergy after the departure of their last full-time clergy person over three years ago, the congregation has, to some extent, learned to function without a priest always telling them what to do and how to carry out leadership responsibilities. SJEC has a good reputation throughout the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania and the Delaware Valley Deanery as a church of committed Christians that carry out their church commitment on a daily basis.

## **CONTEXT WITHIN THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION**

This church fits more into the model of a *Catholic Protestant* Episcopal Church. SJEC is not as ‘high church’ or Anglo Catholic in their style of worship as some other congregations in the Diocese of Pennsylvania, which is, by the way, the oldest diocese in the Episcopal Church. Maybe it’s the ‘island mentality’, but here again; they have always done things their own way, not really conscious of or concerned about their connection not only to the rest of the Episcopal Church, but the worldwide Anglican Communion as well.

## **CONTEXT WITHIN THE ‘HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH’**

The current mission statement of the church is as follows:

We at St. John’s are part of Christ’s body in the World. Our Mission is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ by being a spiritual worshipping community, faithful stewards of Christ’s love, and proclaiming by word and deed the good news of God in Jesus Christ.

SJEC has a commendable history of being recognized as a positive member of the local Christian community. There is a tradition here that the local Episcopal priest becomes the chaplain for the Tinicum Island Fire and Rescue Department. As Chaplain of the Department I provide the invocation at the beginning of fire department meetings. As the representative of the fire department, I may be called to the hospital, or to homes that have experienced tragedy. The chaplaincy position provides the priest and SJEC an opportunity to minister in community outside of church doors. This good community connection has not, however, served as an impetus to church growth. Is there an appreciation for St. John’s within the community? Yes. Has that led to significant numbers of community members participating in the congregation? Not necessarily.

In both theory and practice, this church has a good history of combining care and support for each other, as well as for those outside the church. For example, every year SJEC has an annual spaghetti dinner, and donates all the proceeds from this event to missions. In 2011, \$600 went to a local food pantry and \$600 went to an inter-faith hospitality network that houses homeless people. That speaks volumes to those inside the church and those outside the church about SJEC's commitment to its mission statement.

## **STATEMENT OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND RELATED GOALS**

### **RESEARCH QUESTION ONE:**

What is the paradigm of leadership for the Church of St. John the Evangelist and what does the Bible say about the relationship between the ministry of the people and that of the priest? Is it possible to focus on congregational development, especially numerical church growth, without destroying the traditions that this particular church embraces and loves? What things will remain the same and what will need to change?

Goal 1: Through teaching from scripture and history, raise the awareness of the congregation to the historical and scriptural basis for the *congregational ministry paradigm* contrasted to the *clergy ministry paradigm*.

### **RESEARCH QUESTION TWO**

Scripture tells us that Servant Leadership was preached and practiced by Jesus in the Gospels and taught in the New Testament epistles. How does Servant Leadership affect the ministry/sustainability model being developed in SJEC Church; who are the 'ministers' and who will be the recipients of 'ministry'?

Goal 2 – Establish ten ministry teams built on the scriptural model of Ephesians 4:

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up (Ephesians 4:11, 12 NIV).

### RESEARCH QUESTION THREE

In keeping with the Anglican theological position on the ministry of the “ordained clergy through apostolic succession” and the focus on the trilogy of Scripture, tradition and reason (i.e. the Anglican ‘3 legged stool’); how can SJEC, within the polity and tradition of the Episcopal Church, embrace new methods of church growth and congregational development?

Goal 3 Team leaders will be able to explain, and be willing to recommend to the church the ‘congregational ministry paradigm’.

### ORIGINAL STRATEGIES SUPPORTING GOALS

#### RELATED TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following Goals 1-3 relate to their corresponding Research Questions. Below are charts of the basic strategies originally designed to meet these goals. In Chapter 3, we will present the actual, final strategies as implemented, and explain how and why they were adjusted.

**Goal 1:** Through teaching from scripture and history, raise the awareness of the congregation to the historical and scriptural basis for the congregational ministry paradigm contrasted to the clergy ministry paradigm.

**Table 1 Demonstration Project Proposal. Strategies to be employed to achieve Goal 1**

SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES	CONTEXT	RECURRENCE
Sermons	Sunday Am Services	On-Going
Bible Studies	Rectory	3 6-Wk Sessions
Training	Committee Meetings	On-Going

**Goal 2:** Establish ten ministry teams built on the scriptural model of Ephesians 4:11, 12, “equipping the saints for the work of the ministry” for all ministry areas of the church.

**Table 2 Demonstration Project Proposal. Strategies to be employed to achieve Goal 2**

SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES	CONTEXT	RECURRENCE
Invite People To Serve As Chair	Committees	One Time Event
New Chairs Help Recruit Members	Committees	On-Going
Invite Guest Speakers From The Community To Present Ministry Possibilities	Committee Meetings, Services, Coffee Hours	On-Going
Evaluate, Rewrite Bylaws To Support New Structures	Committees, Vestry	On-Going
Write Articles On Accepting Others' Ministry	Newsletters	January And February

**Goal 3:** Team leaders will be able to explain and be willing to recommend to the church the ‘congregational ministry paradigm’.

**Table 3 Demonstration Project Proposal: Strategies to be employed to achieve Goal 3**

SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES	CONTEXT	RECURRENCE
END-OF-PROJECT CELEBRATION OF MINISTRY	SPECIAL EVENT	ONE TIME EVENT
END-OF-PROJECT SURVEYS	MEMBERS	ONE TIME EVENT

## **SUMMARY AND REFLECTION**

In the following chapters, I will not only present what I planned to do and why, but what actually happened, and how and why the changes were required. Again, as with all church projects that take place in the real world, and not just on paper, the outworking of the supporting activities of this demonstration project produced both happy surprises and rude awakenings, just as in all of life as it is actually lived, not just planned or imagined.

In summary, this research and study produced real learning. My ultimate goal in this demonstration project was to introduce and strengthen the ministry paradigm I understand to be outlined in Ephesians 4:11, 12: i.e., the work of the clergy is primarily “to equip the saints for the work of the ministry,” to train and prepare leaders for the future, so that they in turn can lead and help develop future leaders of the church. It is this model of leadership at the congregational level that I believe can enable the members to ‘do the work’ of the church, whether or not a congregation can support a full time clergy person.

My vision was to put most of my time into training leaders, so that they in turn can do the work of the ministry and also to train others to do the work of the ministry. That I did, sometimes with encouraging results, sometimes with less than encouraging results, but always with learning taking place; in both the members and me.

If the church of Christ is, after more than 2000 years, still ‘a work in progress’ (which I would contend it is), it certainly is no surprise that St. John’s Episcopal Church in Essington, PA, like so many other small American mainline denominational congregations with long histories, is also still ‘a work in progress’. That fact, in and of itself, is a great source of encouragement and incentive. That is why this study is so



important and why the research is so vital: it examines the need for change in the church from the perspective of one parish and develops a paradigm for how to manage the change faithfully.

## **CHAPTER 2 THE CHALLENGE**

### **CHALLENGE STATEMENT**

St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Church in Essington, Pennsylvania is one of four churches in an island community of 4,200. St. John's, a dwindling, financially struggling parish, has a traditional view that the priest executes the ministry of the church. They are eager to become 'self-supporting.' My challenge as the current priest-in-charge is to lead them into a new ministry paradigm that will not only achieve the numeric growth required for sustainability, but will also focus on 'equipping the saints for the work of the ministry'. Without such a ministry/sustainability model, St. John's and similar churches are unlikely to be able to achieve equilibrium, focus on meaningful ministry, and look confidently to the future.

### **PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF THE CHALLENGE**

Churches say they want to grow and change. It is a common refrain among churches of every denomination. I believe what they usually mean is that they want to continue doing things the way they are comfortable doing them, but they know they need more money and more people to make that possible. Many small mainline denominational congregations know they must 'change or die', but subconsciously they want to be able to continue doing church in the same way as they have always done it. They may realize that's not possible, but can't imagine church differently.<sup>1</sup>

One of my goals was to strengthen, expand and broaden the outreach of SJEC. Outreach was targeted, once we put together committees for specific areas of ministry. Many of SJEC committees were committees of one or two. That's really not a committee.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Landall, *What People Expect From the Church* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon, 1999), 89-103.

That's someone with a job. Most have never really worked on a committee, except for special events like bazaars and spaghetti dinners. My challenge was that while there are people here that are good-hearted and hardworking, much of the work has been individualistic without including others in areas of responsibilities. The vestry and I agreed that this 'individualistic' approach to ministerial responsibility needed to be addressed first. A sense of community and working together in team effort was emphasized from the beginning of this project. It is foundational.

I understand some of their reasons for leaning towards individual versus group responsibility. This is a small, old church, and many have come and gone. Also, there are certain people that only wanted to do certain things. Either they had not been able to get others to work with them in their particular area, or they chose to work alone. Some prefer not to be on a team. They may be overly protective of their ministry and not willing for others to know what they are doing. They are not malicious, but they are protective of their ministry. To a certain extent, it is true that their faithfulness and reliability have helped keep this church running even during difficult periods in the history of the church.

The concept of team ministry is somewhat foreign to many. My responsibility has been to practice the model that I introduced; to show by example that team ministry is not antithetical to the Episcopal Church; to show that neither the Church nor the Bible teach that the priest is spiritually superior to laity in rank and profile; that the priest is in charge and ministers alone, and that ministry is from the top down and not the bottom up. I have attempted to model Servant leadership as the right way to lead.<sup>2</sup> But, I believe that

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<sup>2</sup> Avery Cardinal Dulles, *Models of the Church* (New York: Doubleday, 2002), 81-94.

learning to work together has provided accountability and camaraderie, and a new awareness and appreciation of multi-faceted giftedness within the community of faith. The process is not done. A new structure has been introduced. It will take time, patience, pastoral leadership and modeling. However, the individualistic model of ministry has been taught and modeled by clergy to this congregation for many years.

There was a sense of urgency because it takes time to change an older established church. By January 2011, I had been at SJEC for over a year, and knew it was time to make some needed changes. After our Vestry meeting in January, I introduced plans that were to take effect immediately, but we waited to introduce the plan officially at the church's annual parish meeting in February.

January 1, 2012 marks my second anniversary with SJEC. I have been learning about the environment of this small island community, and I have begun to understand the culture in which the individual congregants live. I know better now about the forces that challenges this island. I understand the influence of an International Airport that shares part of the island and has an aggressive plan to take over more parts of the island. Islanders are looking at the very real possibility that they will be forced from their homes and their land. I understand and empathize with these fears.

Before I started my work at SJEC, it was my observation that the church was operating in a survival mode, with the attitude that 'just enough' was required; just enough money, just enough time and just enough effort. The challenge has been to develop a new paradigm, to plant a new vision for doing church, an excitement for church, church growth and development. I addressed an immediate need to introduce a 'member placement procedure' in order to get people involved, to get more people into

committees, task forces, and teams so that as soon as possible everyone who wants to can find a place; a ‘fit’ within the church, to adopt a sense of church ownership, a sense of responsibility. It’s important to get the perspective of those people that are looking into the church from the outside; as well as that of those looking from the inside-outside of the church.<sup>3</sup>

## **CONGREGATIONAL MINISTRY VS. CLERGY MINISTRY PARADIGM**

### **GOAL 1:**

My ultimate goal was to introduce the ministry paradigm outlined in Ephesians 4:11: i.e., the work of the clergy is *primarily to equip the saints for the work of the ministry*, to train and prepare leaders for the future, so that they in turn can lead and help develop future leaders of the church. It is this model of leadership at the congregational level that will enable the members to ‘do the work’ of the church, whether or not a congregation can support a full time clergy person. My vision was to put most of my time into training leaders, so that they in turn can do the work of the ministry and also to train others to do the work of the ministry.<sup>4</sup>

In the leadership of the Episcopal Church we have a great deal of respect and reverence for the ordained clergy, bishops, priests and deacons of the church. We refer to our church tradition as ‘apostolic’, in that, at least in theory, we can trace succession of ordained leadership by the laying on of hands of ordained ministry from the bishops (only in succession) all the way back to the early 12 apostles, and including the Apostle Paul. So, we like to think we can trace our leadership back to the actual beginnings of the

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<sup>3</sup> George Hunter, *Church for the Unchurched* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon, 1996), 124-141.

<sup>4</sup> Ed Stetzer, *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age* (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 96-102.

church. Anglicans share that belief with the Roman Catholic Church, Lutherans and Orthodox churches. We are an apostolic church, and we have high regard and respect for ordained leadership of the church.<sup>5</sup>

Somewhere in the history of the church, however, this theory has developed into a practice in which the priest may think that he or she knows better than everybody else and thinks that clergy should do everything in the church. And, unfortunately, clergy are not the only ones that think that. This has been a problem with parishes as well, assuming that the priest should do the work of the church, because it is, after all, the priest who knows all and is the kingpin and center around which the church revolves. He or she should lead the church and make all decisions, because priests are the anointed of God (apparently).

While this theory of a high regard for ordained leadership has some advantages for the church, it can also inhibit church growth. The project will address this through the concept of team ministry and a different approach to leadership. These ideas are not at odds with the polity of the Episcopal Church. There is a respect and a reverence for spiritual authority and the priesthood. Taken to an extreme, however, this leadership concept will hold the church back from healthy growth and development, and inhibit individuals from reaching out and taking on the leadership positions that are necessary for congregations to mature.

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<sup>5</sup> Vicki Black, *Welcome to the Book of Common Prayer* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Morehouse, 2005), 106-107.

## **SCRIPTURAL FOUNDATION FOR PARADIGM (TEAM MINISTRY)**

In January of 2011, I started a series of teachings about the early church, with the idea that as we study the early church it will give us a good idea of how we as a congregation are bound to the church of the ages, and how what we do today has been influenced by the beginnings of the Church as represented in the New Testament writings of Acts and the Epistles. We looked at the early pictures of the church in the writings about Ephesus, Colossi, Philippi, Corinth, Galatia and Thessalonica.

We discussed the early church in Galatians. Our discussion was centered about an emerging church in transition. The central theme was the freedom we have to live our Christian lives, without worrying about legalistic structures and old paradigms that bind us from looking at our Christian life and the way we do church in a new and meaningful way.

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. (Galatians 5:1, NIV)

We discussed that even as the emerging church today is not a church of do's and don'ts, so the book of Galatians is not a letter about do's and don'ts, of what is right and what is not right. It's a letter about freedom, freedom in the spirit. That freedom is governed by the Holy Spirit and is built on the foundation of the cross of Jesus Christ, our rights to inheritance as the true seed of Abraham. Within the spirit of the law we will fulfill the obligations of the law.

The obligations are to stand fast in the liberty we have received through the righteousness of Jesus Christ in the fulfillment of the law (Gal. 5: 14). By loving our neighbor we fulfill the entire command of the law, according to Paul. We further honor the fulfillment of the law by loving our neighbors as ourselves (Gal. 6:2) and by carrying

each other's burdens we fulfill the law of Christ. This verse is an amplification of loving our neighbor. This obeying the law comes by obeying the Spirit, not addressing the letter of the law. My challenge for this group of parishioners was: "What is the requirement of being a Christian? Does that change? Have you ever been so busy being a Christian that you forgot to enjoy the freedom you have?"

Another question I brought up in this series is "What is freedom in Christ? How can we work on this in a good way? How do we develop the fruit of the Spirit? What practices help you? What is a spiritual practice, and how do we start one and keep it? How does this affect us as we do church? How do we bring spiritual practices into the church?"

Some of the comments were applicable to the dilemma that I sensed in the church. One member of the class commented that "I never think of the church as a place of spiritual practices. I have always thought of that as something that you do on your own." Another response was: "The church is where we do stuff. Spiritual practices take time and effort. It seems like we don't have that kind of time at church."

In these lessons, and in sermons and newsletter articles, I began stressing the importance of 'similar but different'. We are all similar to one another as members of the Body of Christ (Rom. 12:3-5), but we all have specific personalities, character traits and places of ministry that coincide with our skill sets and callings (1 Cor. 12:12).

I began to emphasize the love of God and the importance of maintaining a constant love for one another, "for love covers a multitude of sins; to be hospitable to one another without complaining" And, like "good stewards of the manifold grace of God," we are to serve one another with whatever gift each one has received (1Pet.4:8-10). We



emphasized the purposes of the gifts in the church, and then we broke up into smaller groups and talked about what our individual gifts, skill sets and ministries might be. Then we discussed what skill sets are lacking in our individual lives and in our church. We discussed methods of accessing those gifts and talents that seem to be missing through concentrated interactions with others.

We discussed the church as a building ‘under construction’. As it says in 1 Peter: We are lively stones...a building in progress, and like living stones we are learning to be built into a spiritual house, (a house that is undergoing transformational change) in order to be a holy priesthood, and to do what priests do: “To offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 2:5).

We introduced the concept of a church that is organic yet structured, moving freely without restraint, yet orderly and structured at the same time. A church that is viable will be healthy socially and connected for emotional and spiritual vitality, yet sensible, pragmatic and wise. We presented the following questions in our Bible studies, newsletters and sermons:

- What does organic yet structural mean?
- What do a picture of the body and a picture of a building have in common?
- What building block do you think you are? Where do you fit into the structure of the church?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses? We are not talking about sinful behavior—what we are looking at is strengths and weaknesses. How do your strengths minister to the Body of Christ?
- How do your strengths minister to the building of the church (You are a lively stone) (Eph. 2:8-10)? The dual emphasis is on individual wholeness, but that wholeness cannot be defined without being a part of the larger picture—the

church body made up of individuals, working for unity, peace and harmony (Eph. 4: 2-6).

- How can your weaknesses be made stronger through interaction with others?  
What does give and take have to do with this building that is a work in progress? (Eph. 2:13-14, 18-22) The church as a building of individuals intended to merge and to blend together as one—not an easy task, but enjoyable if the Holy Spirit is allowed to do the bonding together (Eph. 2:18-22; Eph. 4:7-13,16).

We introduced the following discussion threads to be developed inside and outside Bible study time. The similarities of the early church and the church today included the following:

- The church was made up of rich and poor, merchants and business owners, and those that worked for the workers and business owners.
- Because of their cultural differences, there were differences of opinion in the church about what was right and wrong about how people lived their lives. Paul addressed some of these issues.
- Paul acknowledged that most early Christians were not wealthy, of noble birth, wise or of high status. However, some were. There was not a large middle class, just rich and poor. Just as the middle class is shrinking in our time.
- Some of the wealthier homeowners had church meetings in their house. See Romans 16:23, where the entire church (maybe only 100+) could worship in Gaius' house—a large house for that time. Others also hosted church meetings in their houses (Cor. 11:17-22). Today, we also emphasize the importance of small groups. It's easier to interact and experience transformational change in a smaller group setting.
- Then as today, there were conflicts between the rich and the poor, the haves and the have not (1 Cor. 1:26).
- There were conflicts then and today between well-known religious leaders (1 Cor. 3:1-9).

- Then and now there are conflicts about how to define and what represents true spirituality (1 Cor. 2:2-5).

We laid some foundational pieces for church growth and development that come to us from the ancient church. The foundational pieces that the first church in Jerusalem committed themselves to included (1) Teaching, (2) Fellowship, (3) Breaking of Bread and (4) Prayers.

We addressed the following questions as a church in transition, just as the first church was in transition. We attempted to answer these questions together in an interactive way.

- Question: How do we follow these four foundational pieces in our church today?
- Question: Can breaking of bread together have more than one meaning?
- Question: Is teaching more important or is fellowship more important?
- Question: Why is prayer listed in the foundation piece? What kind of prayer are they talking about?
- Question: How did the early church 'do church'?
- Question: Every day, where did they spend much time together? What replaced the temple after the disciples were eventually kicked out? (Acts 5:42)
- Question: Is breaking bread and eating food a religious thing? If not was it just a religious thing in this situation or should it be a religious thing now? (Acts 6:3)
- Question: What does this tell us about evangelism? Is it planned or is it a natural occurrence from what we see here? (Acts 6:7)
- Question: Can you see the Episcopate tradition evolving here? In Holy Orders who would the first bishops be? Who would be the priests? Who would be the deacons?

During the six weeks of the opening teaching series on how the ancient church influences the way *we do church today*, we also began to talk about restructuring, congregational growth and planning for the future. We began by introducing to the vestry and all the leaders of guilds, committees, and leadership teams in the church the importance of working together as teams, and the idea that the team did not mean a committee of two or a committee of many with one chairperson making all the decisions.

I wrote newsletters beginning in January, and for the next five months about taking on leadership roles in the church. We talked in small groups, and committee meetings and vestry meetings about working together as teams, and about how the priest was a leader among leaders and how my job as a priest of the church is to accept people for who they are, recognize them as potential leaders in the church, encourage and make available learning tools for growth and movement into areas of leadership.

I sought to introduce the truth that it is ‘okay’ to make mistakes, in fact to expect some mistakes. I wanted to create an atmosphere of trust, appreciation and acceptance. Finally, I wanted to encourage those that were moving into areas of leadership that I ‘had their back’ and would do everything I could to support and uphold their decisions.

My goal was to have 70% of the leadership team gain a working understanding of the Congregational Ministry paradigm as opposed to the Clergy Ministry paradigm, by the end of the six-month project. Having analyzed the results of our *Survey-Monkey* at the end of the project, and personal conversations on a one-on-one basis, it is clear we made significant progress towards this goal. We did not have as many meetings and sessions as I had charted on the timeline, but I learned that the timeline was, in the words of my site team and advisor, “too busy.”

I found that face-to-face discussions and meetings, teaching team leadership in the small committee settings, as well as sermons and newsletter articles was a more effective approach than trying to have larger meetings with all the leadership in the church. I observed that, like me, they are far too busy for me to expect too much of their time. All of our leaders are already involved in many church related activities, and it is too much to ask of them to increase their load. Instead, we coordinated the activities they were already involved in and used those as teaching vehicle opportunities. If I were to do the project again, I would scale back the time-line dates and times, and not expect too much too soon. I learned that for a project as intense as this one, a six-month window does not allow enough time to do everything I wanted or expected. Neither, in such a short time, is it appropriate to expect to see a reversal of paradigms in a church that has been doing things in a traditional mode for over 100 years. I learned that the structure and the foundation for sustainability in the future was what the project needed to bring.

## **CHAPTER 3 THE PLAN**

### **GOAL 2**

Scripture tells us that Servant Leadership was preached and practiced by Jesus in the Gospels and taught in the New Testament epistles.

- How does Servant Leadership affect the ministry/sustainability model being developed in SJEC?
- Who are the ‘ministers’ and who will be the recipients of ‘ministry’?

### **SERVANT LEADERSHIP: TOP-DOWN**

Scripture tells us that Servant Leadership was preached and practiced by Jesus in the Gospels and taught in the New Testament epistles. My goal was to model and teach this style of leadership at SJEC, by emphasizing a ministry/sustainability model that is not dependent on hierarchy; and to define with more clarity who are the ‘ministers’ and who will be the recipients of the ‘ministry’.

It was my observation, as well as the observation from members of my site team, that SJEC was limited by a traditional model of leadership that we refer to in this paper as the *Clergy Ministry* paradigm. This model, that we have encountered at SJEC, is often referred to in the wider church as ‘clericalism’. The traditional view in the Episcopal Church is that the Rector or Priest in Charge calls all the shots and is the ‘go to’ person for all things, great or small. There was limited involvement by parishioners, and that involvement more often than not centered on individual tasks or assigned jobs. These tasks or jobs had been assigned to individuals at one time or another by past clergy. Even

the committees were not real committees. Some were committees of one or two that never met, and the chairperson of the committee made all the decisions.

I remember meeting with my bishop and the Standing Committee from my Diocese in Western Michigan. They were making the decision on whether I should advance or not from the status of a ‘transitional deacon’ to an ordained priest in the Episcopal Church. When someone asked me what I considered my role as a priest in the church should be, I responded by saying that my first main role as a priest will be the Celebrant of the Eucharist at the altar. My second responsibility on a list, if there was a list to be made, is to accept, recognize, encourage and empower leaders for the church. I saw my role as an ordained priest as a leader among leaders. I said that I think the role of the priest needs to change from how it has been taught in the past. The priest can no longer be a copy of a ‘Custer’s Last Stand’ movie. The world does not revolve around the priest. I did not wish to be in a model that elevated the priest at the expense of lowering the demands and expectations of the laity that I serve. I know my Bishop agreed with me.

The Standing Committee approved my ordination process, to move forward in scheduling an ordination into the priesthood of the Episcopal Church. However, they did ask me to consider the position that I shared about the role of the priest. I have reconsidered that role a hundred times since then, and in this project I considered it again. My thoughts about being the leader among a team of leaders have not changed. My position has become stronger.

It was at a spaghetti dinner fundraiser that I realized that servant leadership might not have been modeled effectively in the past by the clergy of SJEC. I had agreed to help with the dishes and the clean up after the dinner. One of the parishioners came up to me

while I was washing dishes in the kitchen and said: “I have been going to this church all my life, and this is the first time I have ever seen one of our priests working in the kitchen.” Several others present mentioned this as well.

Perhaps this was meant to be a compliment, but it struck me as sad and disappointing. All priests begin as ordained deacons, and we are deacons for life. A deacon is a servant. Washing dishes is similar to washing feet. It’s a way for those of us in leadership to display the servant leadership role that Jesus told us to model. Jesus’ model of ministry is that the way to the top is by going to the bottom.

But many who are first will be last, and the last first (Mark 10:31, NIV) .

The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45, NIV) .

Before bringing judgment on this traditional style of parish leadership that showers respect and reverence for ordained ministry, it is my opinion that this respect for leadership is healthy if held in balance with the *Congregational Ministry* paradigm. Scripture, church history and tradition tells us that respect for those that labor among us is a healthy attitude for everyone in the church. Paul tells the church to show proper respect to leaders:

Give a bonus to leaders who do a good job, especially the ones who work hard at preaching and teaching. Scripture tells us, "Don't muzzle a working ox," and "A worker deserves his pay." “Don't listen to a complaint against a leader that isn't backed up by two or three responsible witnesses” (1 Tim. 5:18, Message).

In our prayer models in the *Book of Common Prayer*, we are asked to pray for ordained offices of the church. In five out of six of the Prayers of the People in the BCP we are instructed to pray for bishops and priests, and all ordained clergy that lead the



church.<sup>6</sup> I appreciate the seriousness and appreciation for the ordained offices in the Episcopal Church. I truly believe this is strength. But, I also think that what is strength can also be detrimental to sustainable and viable congregational development and church growth. Strengths, if not perceived in a healthy congregational model paradigm, can be weakness.

I began immediately to teach on Jesus as our model for servant leadership. I used illustrations in sermons, newsletters, small groups, committee meetings and wherever small groups met. We considered this a tool for transformational change. What I found was that my most effective tool for transformative change from teaching a healthy leadership model was in one-on-one or one-on-two settings. SJEC is a small church, so I was able to meet with all of our leaders at least four or five times during the project. I was encouraged by responses like: “I know that’s the right way to do ministry, by team and committee, but no-one has emphasized this here before in the way you are presenting it”; and “This makes a lot more sense to me. It’s like I’m not all by myself in my responsibilities anymore”; and “I’m excited about being on a team with other people that have the same interests as I do for this church.”

I learned that, for the most part, people in the parish are hungry and desiring spiritual guidance into a sustainable future. I learned that they too are aware that the church needs to make some changes in order to be a sustainable and viable church in the future. They receive instruction well if it is applied in a loving and serving way.

People can tell if you are just dumping your textbook model on their parish or if you really care and want to help them to grow and change. Transformation is a work of

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<sup>6</sup> Episcopal Church, *The Book of Common Prayer* (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), 383-393.

love, and people can recognize the nature of that work if presented in an atmosphere that is forgiving, challenging and encouraging.

If I were to do this project again, Servant Leadership would again be my model for leading the church into transformational change. This model of leadership has influenced both church and secular leaders. I will reflect on the model in the church and then look at that model as it is being used in other institutions and corporations.

### **SCRIPTURAL FOUNDATION FOR SERVANT LEADERSHIP**

This message of Servant Leadership is expressed in the following parables of Jesus:

#### **❖ Parable of the best chair.**

When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down in the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, “Give this person your place,” and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher.’ Then you will be honored by all who sit at the table with you. For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted (Luke 14:8-11 NIV).

#### **❖ Washing feet:**

Serving is an active verb. The best way to win confidence and respect of others is to treat them with respect—serve their needs, not inform them of their needs—truly seeking to understand and appreciate them as unique individuals, created in the image of God.

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him (John 13:3-5 NIV).

### ❖ The woman caught in adultery:

Jesus did not encourage this lifestyle, but he did look deeper than the living conditions and into the heart of the person. He forgave the woman, and he challenged the angry crowd to show forgiveness as well. From a practical point of view, what good can anything come out of not forgiving others of their wrongs? (John 8:1-10 NIV)

### ❖ The good Samaritan:

In this parable the Samaritan on his way to Jericho established a timeless legacy. His legacy will live on in the tradition of his family, community, victim's family, and the entire world throughout history. He did not consider his own comfort level, but instead extended what he had in order to serve; and if that was not enough, he made plans to be fiscally responsible in his serving, even after he was gone (Luke 10:30-35 NIV).

In the book, *Leadership*, edited by DuBrin, a servant leader is described as someone who serves others by working on their behalf, in order to help them fulfill their goals, not the goal of the leader. Serving others is the primary motivation for the servant leader. Servant leadership has been accomplished when group members become wiser, healthier, and more autonomous.<sup>7</sup> To be an effective servant leader, one needs good followers. Leaders cannot exist without followers. Good followers share four essential qualities; self-management, commitment, competence and focus, and courage.<sup>8</sup> A key role for followers is to collaborate with leaders to achieve organizational goals, which implies the need for teamwork. When leaders do not make all the decisions, but solicit input from knowledgeable followers, leaders and followers work together more closely.

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<sup>7</sup> Andrew Dubrin, *Leadership* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2004), 106.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 486.

Today's organizations are evolving into federations of networks, clusters, cross-functional teams, temporary systems, ad hoc task forces, lattices, modules, and matrices, almost anything but pyramids with their obsolete top-down leadership. The new leader will encourage healthy dissent and values those followers courageous enough to say no.<sup>9</sup>

Just because someone claims to be a leader, that does not make them an effective leader. Credentials and personalities do not mean you will have or even deserve a following. Followership is something that needs to be earned. A leader is recognized and perceived as a leader by others. A self-imposed leader is not recognized or respected in that position of authority (Matthew 15:14, Deuteronomy 27:18). Jesus said that the thief comes only to harm and to steal. A leader that comes by any other door is not a leader (John 10:10).

Every person is important. We are all called to be leaders. Everyone has certain gifts and abilities that are tailor-made to suit their personality. True leadership will recognize these gifts and abilities, and utilize them, both for the benefit of the organization and for the benefit and fulfillment of each individual person.

A servant leader will learn to be an emphatic listener. Empathetic listening gets inside another person's frame of reference. You look through it, you see the world the way they see the world, you understand their paradigm, and understand how they feel.

In empathetic listening you listen with your ears, but you also, and more importantly, listen with your eyes and with your heart. You listen for feeling, for meaning. You listen for behavior. You use your right brain as well as your left. You sense, you intuit, you feel. Next to physical survival, the greatest need in a human being is psychological, to be understood, to

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 487.

be affirmed, to be validated, to be appreciated. When you listen with empathy to another person, you give that person psychological air.<sup>10</sup>

We must strive to understand before we can be understood. People respond to an empathetic ear. People respond to a warm and friendly atmosphere, where creativity and ingenuity are recognized, appreciated, and encouraged. When you do not pay attention to what others have to say, you communicate the message that you are not interested in them. However, when you do listen you communicate worth and acceptance and you show them that you care.<sup>11</sup> Paul Tillich said that the “first duty of love is to listen.”<sup>12</sup> If you want to relate to others, be impressed and interested. “Therefore, be careful how you listen” (Luke 8:18a).

Servant leadership is not a new phenomenon. The principles and examples have been around since the beginning of creation. However history proves that these principles have been terribly violated, there is a servant leadership movement within society which encompasses civil, business and church communities.

This movement is not necessarily in juxtaposition to the structures within society, whether they are ancient or new. But, when these structures violate the principles of servant leadership, they need to be reexamined within the light of Scripture, tradition, and reason. Honesty is a virtue that is all too often hidden behind rigid tenets and unsound methodologies.

Effective leaders will incorporate sound theory into the structures of churches, communities, organizations and all other social groupings. Servant leaders will seek first

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<sup>10</sup> Stephen Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (New York: Fireside, 2000), 241.

<sup>11</sup> John Maxwell, *Becoming a Person of Influence* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 1992), 81.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

to understand before attempting to be understood. Leaders must accept the uniqueness and individuality of each person. Each person has a personality and a skill set that must be recognized within an atmosphere of acceptance, warmth and encouragement.

Teamwork and collaboration must be more than catchwords. A healthy and growing organization, designed for enriching change and renewal, must recognize the value and creativity of each gifted member to the overall success of the group. Those who seek truth, and have a desire to recognize, motivate and lead other seekers into truth must relinquish the autonomy of totalitarian leadership. The cutting edge of leadership will continue to flourish in environments that are open to creative change, new ideas and fiscal honesty to truth and the development of truth.

Leadership is a gift, but necessary skills of leadership can be learned, developed and honed throughout life. In the book by James Hunter, *The Servant*, the monk Simeon defines leadership in the opening chapter. Whenever “two or more people are gathered together for a purpose there is an opportunity for leadership.”<sup>13</sup>

Simeon goes on to state that principles of leadership and influence are available to everyone. He also states that leadership, influencing others, is a skill set that can be learned and developed by anyone with the desire to learn and follow through with appropriate actions.<sup>14</sup>

According to Hunter, leadership “is the skill of influencing people to work enthusiastically toward goals identified as being for the common good.”<sup>15</sup> In this

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<sup>13</sup> James Hunter, *The Servant: A Simple Story About the True Essence of Leadership* (San Francisco: Prima Publishing, 1998), 28.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 76.

discourse Simeon makes the point that there has never been anyone with as much influence on the human race as Jesus Christ. He was neither an appointed leader in the religious hierarchy, nor was he born into leadership in the political ruling families. Those that came into contact with him recognized his authority. He had a strong presence about him. He spoke and acted out his life and mission with authority. His vision and focus was unwavering.

In the book of Acts, Paul demonstrated authority in the midst of chaos. Paul was shipwrecked off the coast of Miletus. He was a prisoner, but he had a presence about him that demanded respect. In the midst of the storm, he quieted the sailors and the jailors that were accompanying the prisoners. Paul encouraged them all to eat and prepare to be shipwrecked, and he instructed them that no one would be lost; but in so doing, they needed to follow his instructions. When the sailors tried to leave the ship, he again instructed the jailors that they could not survive if that was allowed to happen.

Paul again demonstrated his charismatic leadership on the island of Miletus. He won the respect of the islanders as well as his shipmates. Biblical history does not tell us if a church was established on the island, but the fact that he left in his wake a miraculous revival of healings leads to a probable conclusion that the church of Miletus was born through the acts and teachings of a Roman prisoner (Acts 27, 28, NIV).

Most people can play the piano if they will discipline themselves to systematically learn and discipline themselves in the mechanics of piano. Some piano players are extremely talented, but how often do we encounter someone like Mozart or Beethoven? In the movie, *Groundhog Day*, the star is destined to repeat his actions every day of the year over and over again. Stuck in time, he learns to play the piano, develops public

relation and medical skills, etc.<sup>16</sup> If I were stuck in time for one day that stretched to a thousand years, I would never be able to understand math like Einstein. He had a specific charisma that I do not have, nor can I ever learn. Sure, I can improve my IQ and creativity and learn math skills, but I will never be gifted in the same way in math that others are, unless God divinely imparts that gift to me.

Leadership, especially ministry leadership, requires this type of divine charisma. There are a lot of teachers, but we all know only a few teachers that are so gifted that we would emulate them if we could. Leadership skills can be learned and developed, but sometimes we might be erring by putting people in positions that they are not especially gifted in. This is also an example of servant leadership; thinking of the good and welfare of others.

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<sup>16</sup> Harold Ramis, *Groundhog Day* (1983), Sony Pictures Classics, 2006.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESTRUCTURING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE**

#### **RECONFIGURING OF COMMITTEES AND TEAMS**

When I hear the word ‘committee’ my first response is ‘boring’, and I remember the comments I have made in the past: “I need another committee meeting like I need a hole in the head”; and “Some of the church committees I have been involved with have been a waste of time.”, when I use the word ‘committee’, however, I could easily replace it with the word ‘small group’. Or I could change the name to ‘team’. The important message is that a team entails more than one, and in that team/committee there is camaraderie and sharing. A team that is controlled by one dominant person is not a healthy team consisting of a leader among leaders.

Maybe the ways we have used committees and the role and the structure of committees have left a bad taste in people’s mouths. I can definitely understand that, because I’m one of those people. Just for the record, here is how I will define committee: *A committee is a tool that accentuates teamwork, accountability, purpose, vision and a focus on why a specific group exists and what is the best way to fulfill that mission.*

It may be that we cannot completely get away from an actual meeting at a specified time and place, but perhaps if we review our methods of communicating we can totally redesign the ‘meeting’ model of a committee. If we maintain a priority about communication, most of the teamwork data development items can go on outside of the meetings. If there is a focus on committee as an action verb rather than a fixed noun that

meets in a cold church on the first Friday of every month, then committees can have a new orientation.

I still am wary of too many church committee meetings as a way to administer the affairs of the church. But, who says there has to be one way to do meetings? Meetings can be a teleconference call in which every member participates from the comfort of their home or office. Committees can have their own blogs to which only particular members have access. It would be like a chalkboard that everybody is expected to write on from time to time.

A committee can be the perfect venue for learning about teamwork, to be better versed in history and scripture, and to raise awareness of the congregational ministry paradigm as contrasted to the clergy paradigm. This was our first goal.

Our second goal was to establish ten ministry teams built on the scriptural model of Ephesians 4:11, 12: to build up and equip everyone involved to do a specific area of the work of the ministry (Eph. 4:11 NIV). It takes time to build effective teams. It may appear that we are looking for an easy way out of not attending meetings by using technology to create new ways of communicating, but to build unified teams takes work. A healthy leadership team doesn't just appear. It has to be a focused priority. Without unity, committees will falter, stumble and fail.<sup>17</sup>

SJEC has a reputation in the area as an active church, a place that has a lot of dinners and fundraisers. For over 65 years the church has been hosting a Strawberry Festival. The annual fundraiser features a wide range of activities: strawberry floats, ice-cream and cake, cooked meals, games and rides for the children, cookie and soup sales,

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<sup>17</sup> Larry Osborne, *Sticky Teams* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2010), 24-25.

all kinds of vending tables, etc. The fire department provides road assistance, and the city does a special trash run for us at no charge at the end of the day. There are four churches on this island of 4200, and all of them are represented at our four fundraisers each year, the Strawberry Festival being the largest one.

Each year I meet new people at these festivals who introduce themselves to me as members of SJEC, many of whom I have never seen at church. I look forward to these events because it's a good way to meet people in the community that I might not otherwise see. It really is remarkable how a small church can come together—each person with a specific job—and get things done, year after year. It is a testimony to the community.

The problem is that attendances at the fund raising events are going down every year. Not as many come as they used to, and the money generated is decreasing considerably. It is a lot of work, especially for senior citizens, and a large percentage of our volunteers for these events are seniors. The strengths are becoming a weakness. The younger people in the church are not replacing the older ones, and the seniors are tired. It's hard work to feed hundreds of people at these fundraisers.

In all aspects of the church, I observed a style in which people were functioning. Someone was in charge of the altar guild, someone else over evangelism, and still others over outreach, Sunday school and various other committees and guilds. I noticed there were a lot of people over specific things in the church, but there were few functioning committees.

I define a committee as a group of three or more. Many of these committees were committees of one, or they only existed on paper. Decisions were made by the

chairperson of the committee, if the committee existed at all. In decision-making, the Rector or Priest in Charge was usually the decision maker, and so most decisions, both small and large, were passed on to the clergy.

What I proposed to do was introduce a ‘team ministry leadership’ concept into the church; to focus on small groups. My strategy was to close the dormant committees, and if we thought that they were important for the life of the church we would recreate them. We would also review each committee and the structure of each committee. I would meet with each committee chair and all the committees as soon as possible.

Another problem I observed is that some of the chairpersons had been chairs for many years without a break, and most of these people made their own decisions for the church and they apparently had no concept of team ministry. On paper the church had committees, but in reality many individuals worked alone at specific projects, and they operated in lieu of the committee they represented. You might be able to say they were like fiefdoms or silos that kept the church functioning, but the price was a sick church.<sup>18</sup>

I proposed to resurrect dormant committees, to merge small committees into new committee structures, and to start new committees that had not existed before. During February I proposed to start appointing and orienting chairs of these new committees, meeting one-on-one to counsel and describe the roles and expectations for all committees. I would appoint and work together with the new chairpersons in recruiting new committee members.

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<sup>18</sup> Osborne, *Sticky Teams*, 112.

With the new committee members, we would create a mission statement for the committee (why the committee exists) and develop a vision statement and goals for the committee. Each committee member would have a voice and a vote in this community.

I originally planned to create workshops in March, April and May for all people on the leadership team, and to invite key speakers from area ministries known for encouraging, recognizing, motivating and opening up ministry opportunities for parish members in community ministry. I also planned to start evaluating current By-laws and regulations of SJEC. My objective was to make sure that all the changes were backed by the Episcopal Church of the United States By-laws, and the By-laws of the Diocese of Pennsylvania. At some point we would need to introduce the changes in the by-laws that would need to be incorporated into the parish by-laws.

I had planned to write two newsletter articles in January and February about acceptance and being allowed to grow into areas of ministry without being micromanaged. I expected that all committees would show at least a 30% increase in membership over the previous year at completion of the project in six months. I would work with the chairpersons of each of these committees to compile data by reviewing records and current membership.

I expected that the method of evaluation would be by observation and personal interviews. Those evaluations would be written by the Candidate and reviewed by the site team at regular meetings, as well as the monthly leadership and vestry meetings.

Questions would include: How many committees have been set up? How many members in each committee? What is working? What's not working? How do people feel about the congregational ministry paradigm? Are committees beginning to take initiative and set

their own goals, rather than to simply complete assigned tasks? These and other questions would be announced during monthly reviews.

In accordance with the timeline, I began working with the leaders of the church, which included the vestry and committee members and individuals that had either been assigned or taken on particular leadership roles in the church.

We began revamping the committees at the same time as reworking the By-laws of the church in order to make room for new structure beginning in January of 2011. This included discontinuing a couple of committees, creating new ones and merging several others. We also made changes in the by-laws, changing term limits for committee chairs, vestry leaders and all other non-staff volunteer positions in the church. The changes were initiated to reflect the changes from a clergy ministry paradigm to a congregational ministry paradigm.

We created opportunities by announcing and recruiting for more leadership roles and responsibility opportunities in the church, working on committees and on outreach and evangelism. We did this through personal invitations, one-on-one, and announcements during the church services. Our evaluation consisted of smaller group discussions, committee team member discussions, and utilizing a *Survey Monkey* questionnaire that we used after the six week *IMANI* teaching series.

At the end of the project we saw a 30% increase in committee involvement and activity among members of the congregation. This measurement was calculated from personal observation and the review of current membership records. Even though we had stressed decision-making by the entire community and not just the chairperson, we do see this still happening. It has diminished, but not as much as I expected, as old patterns are

hard to change. However in the written descriptions (by-laws of each committee) the democratic work by the entire committee is encouraged and expected. Therefore, we hope that this experience of group direction rather than individual decision-making on behalf of the others on the team will diminish.

At the end of the project we still had a few leaders in specific areas of the church who did not adopt the new 'team ministry' concept, and they continue to work alone under the old model. It is my hope that the systems in place will correct and change those remaining parts that I consider broken and not sustainable. It may be that some people will need to be asked to step aside from positions of leadership, and if the paradigm works that will happen in the future. It did not happen in the six months of this project.

We did meet our goal of establishing ten new structured committees, and replaced individual models with team models. This is true with only a few exceptions, and those exceptions are targeted for change. Each 'team' or committee has a mission statement and vision statement with objectives that relate to the mission, vision and objectives of the church. All of the structural changes were designed specifically for sustainability for the future. Our goal was not 100%, but 70%, and according to our evaluations we met this goal.

In our project we concentrated on parishioner viability. Parishioner viability means that individuals are taking on ownership of the church in responsibilities, collective oversight, individual ministry and teamwork ministry. These are the variables upon which we measure and grade our success in this project. We will refer to this paradigm as a collective yet personal set of responsibilities and privileges of both taking

personal responsibility in areas of ministry, and also recognizing the group or the team as a mutual leadership model and accepted mode of ministry.

### **SUPPORTING CHANGE WITH POLICY**

In SJEC, all of the standing committees are listed in the Church by-laws. Our work was to examine, rework, discard, resurrect, combine or start new committees. This was our most difficult task in 2011. We then presented our changes to the vestry in October 2011 and now those changes will be presented at the annual membership business meeting on Feb. 5, 2012. Each committee now has its own mission statement, vision and objectives as a committee that reports to the vestry of SJEC. The 10 committees that we see as structured for viable and future sustainability are as follows:

- Education. We added one new position to this committee. The committee is now under the leadership of a Christian Formation Director and a Sunday School Superintendent. We have two youth groups. Both groups and their leaders will be under the direction of the Education Committee and the Priest in Charge.
- Pastoral Care. This is a new committee. This committee is co-chaired by the Priest in Charge and an appointed Pastoral Care leader. This committee also includes five new Eucharistic Visitors that assist the priest with visiting the sick and those in hospitals and nursing homes.
- Communication. This is a new committee. This committee oversees all the communication for SJEC. This includes media, website, blog pages, signage, advertisements, internal and external communication.
- Mission Action. This is a new committee. The committee was formed by a merger of the Evangelism and Outreach committee. This committee oversees all the



evangelism and outreach ministries of SJEC. The Priest in Charge is the co-chair of this committee.

- Worship Committee. This is a new committee. We had a worship committee by name, but it was not involved in worship planning for all areas of worship. This committee was formed by merging several other committees that are now sub-groups of the Worship Committee. The subgroups include music, acolytes, altar servers, lectors, altar guild, choir and ushers. The Priest in Charge is the chair of this committee, but has appointed leaders in each sub-committee.
- Stewardship. We have not made changes to this committee. It was already functioning with multiple members in the decision making process.
- Finance. This committee has been revamped with new members.
- Memorial Gardens. This committee oversees the SJEC columbarium. This committee now has its own set of rules and by-laws. They also have a separate account and are answerable to the vestry and priest in charge. The treasurer has access to this account and they will be audited each year.
- Hospitality. This committee oversees all kitchen coffee hour volunteers and oversees all coffee and food preparations and service for Sunday coffee times and other schedule activities. This group has expanded and now has their own record keeping under the supervision of the vestry and the Priest in Charge.
- By-laws. This committee has reworked the entire by-laws for SJEC in 2011. They have made many changes that support the congregational ministry paradigm and changes that will help insure the future of SJEC with policy making up the structural changes of the new committee and individual ministry changes.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **ENVISIONING THE FUTURE**

#### **DO NOT DESTROY THE ANCIENT LANDMARKS**

I recently spent a weekend retreat with Episcopal clergy of the Diocese of Pennsylvania. Our keynote speaker was Diana Butler Bass. During the weekend we talked about the current situation of, not only, the Episcopal Church but also all churches, Roman Catholic, Protestant and Evangelical. We are all in the same transitional instability. Most of us at the retreat have realized that things must change or the Episcopal Church, as we know it, will not survive. Diane Bass keyed in our frustrations with these words: “The gig is up.”<sup>19</sup>

In other words, the church that we have known and many of us have grown up in is in seriously hurt, and unless we make constructive changes and make them now, the number of Episcopal Churches will continue to diminish as the size of the church membership continues to decline.

We find ourselves in the frustrating and confusing situation that although we want to change, we do not want to forego our connection with ancient liturgy. But neither do we want to keep banging our heads against the walls of ancient buildings that parishes can no longer afford to maintain, and which serve ever shrinking congregations. It was our observation as a group that we needed to not only find new ways to ‘do church’, but

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<sup>19</sup> Diana Butler Bass, *A People’s History of Christianity* (New York: Harper Collins, 2009), 65.

also new ways to ‘be church’. We talked about new working models, and we discussed answers that none of us considered as viable. Some of the responses were as follows:

- “The bookstores are full of new business model churches and mega-church insights of how to grow your congregation and be successful. Those kingdom builders are not what we want to model our churches after.”
- “Not even the emergent churches see eye-to-eye. Many of those leaders want to throw the baby out with the bathwater. I’m not willing to do that.”
- “We should be concentrating on Episcopal Churches and other liturgical church models that are seeing numerical and spiritual growth. What are they doing that we are not?”

One of the dilemmas we all face as Episcopal clergy is that many of our churches, especially those in the bigger cities, are short distances from each other. SJEC is 110 years old, but some of our churches in the Philadelphia area date back to the 1700’s. Most of the churches were built before their community was considered a suburb of Philadelphia, at a time when horses and buggies and walking were the acceptable modes of transportation. Now we have large buildings with small struggling congregations that Episcopalians can choose to drive to. In the geographical area of Delaware County, PA, where SJEC is located, there are ten churches that are within a 10 to 15 minute drive, and three that are less than 3 miles away.

There have been several attempts to deal with this situation. In the past year, ten churches in the Philadelphia area have merged to become one church. Several others have

ceased to exist and the property has been sold or is for sale. There are some rectors who now oversee two parishes. The problem is that it is difficult for churches to change. They are used to having their own rector staying at the church rectory, and it is difficult enough going from a full time priest to a part-time priest, and now they are expected to share a priest with a neighboring congregation. For some, that is just too much to ask, and not their only option.

In August the Diocese of Pennsylvania sent me to a mission conference in Estes Park, Colorado. The conference brought together representatives from all of the Episcopal Church Dioceses in the United States, as well as many from outside the US. The conference was about mission, both abroad and in the US, but part of the conference included the mission of the local parish and where we are headed as a denomination.<sup>20</sup>

I met a missionary from Wyoming at the conference who is the priest in charge for nine congregations scattered throughout his geographical region. It reminds me of the old ‘circuit riders’ that traveled from church to church by horseback. His goal is to establish local leadership in as many of those churches as possible, to merge some that are near enough to one another and to close the ones that are not sustainable.

If the Episcopal Church is to have a sustainable future, it also needs to address the following questions—both corporately and as individual parishes:

- Does the church need to be big enough to afford a full-time priest, especially in areas that are not highly populated like SJEC?
- Can the church be viable with a part-time priest for the future?

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<sup>20</sup>Diana Butler Bass, “Christianity after Religion,” lecture at Brayford Abbey Retreat Center, Conference of the Episcopal Clergy Association of Pennsylvania, Easton, Pennsylvania, November 28, 2011.

- How do we measure viability?
- If this parish disappears, will anybody miss it?

One of the problems with many of the older churches that are struggling with decreasing attendance is a decreasing endowment fund. At one time many of the churches had large endowment funds and many still do. But even if the church has several million dollars invested with annual returns that pay for the upkeep and ministry of the church, it does not mean that congregation is viable.

One minister shared this thought with me: “My church is gone. They just haven’t figured it out yet, because the money gets in the way. They have no ministry presence in the community. Nobody lives in the community and they do not want to grow the church with the people in the community. We have no children, no youth and no middle aged. I’m 70 years old and I feel like I’m one of the younger ones in the church.”

Our challenge statement at SJEC has been to lead the church into a new ministry paradigm that will not only achieve numerical growth required for sustainability, but to focus on ‘equipping the saints for the work of the ministry’. Without such a ministry/sustainability model, SJEC and similar churches are unlikely to be able to achieve equilibrium, focus on meaningful ministry, and look confidently to the future.

That does not mean that we have to give up the worship style and traditions that we cherish. What it does mean is that we need to figure out a way to do church outside of the walls of the church. My challenge to this congregation this past year is to think mission, not Sunday church service.

The church is more than a building and a group of people to hang out with on Sunday morning. The church is more than fixing the buildings, taking care of the grass

and snow, making sure the carpet is clean and the boiler is working. It's a commendable thing that SJEC has done, but my message has been and continues to be: If you want to be viable and sustainable in ministry, there has to be more than what has been in the past. We cannot live on past dreams. Things will never be the way they used to be. SJEC church will not fill up on Sunday, like it did forty years ago, simply because it was an Episcopal Church.

The storyline was that children leave the church as they enter their teen years, but when they get older they come back. That may have been true in days gone by, but this paradigm is no longer functioning. They are not coming back like they used to, and statistics tell us that they are not coming back. There's an alarming statistic that tells us that only 44% of the population of the young people under the age of 30 in the US believe in God, and that percentage is decreasing.

In this past year at SJEC, we have concentrated on new ways to do ministry. We have talked about starting a new wellness program for seniors in the community. We have intensified the outreach opportunities. We have a group of senior citizens that meet every other week for outings, lunch and fellowship. We are hoping to expand that ministry to the community. We have people that are talking about starting a nursing program, an exercise program and fellowship lunchtime, including providing special speakers from the area.

We combined two committees this past year that were dormant or involved in things that did not address either evangelism or outreach adequately. We do not have a homeless population in Essington, so we have become involved with homeless ministries in two locations. Essington is 15 miles from Wilmington, Delaware. One Saturday a

month, starting in February of 2011, we have recruited a group of volunteers that travel to Wilmington to help staff a breakfast kitchen.

On the last Sunday of each calendar month, we have a group of volunteers that travel to Logan Square in Philadelphia to volunteer at the Welcome Church—a park church that was started in Philadelphia over two years ago—targeting homeless and those that live in shelters in the city of Philadelphia. The Mission Action Committee is a catalyst that will help motivate and ignite a new sense of mission for the rest of the people at SJEC. With the new structure we can hope and pray for future sustainability.

During a series called IMANI, which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Six, there were lessons about envisioning the future. In a survey questionnaire the following questions were asked.

- Where do you see this church in 5 years?
- What do you hope the church will be like or what do you think the church will be like in 5 years?"

We received some interesting responses back. Some of the responses were:

- "I'm not sure this church will be around in 5 years."
- "I think this church will probably merge with another church."
- "I think the airport will eventually take over the entire island and the church will be gone."
- "I hope we are around, but we have to make the church more attractive for the young people or they will not come."

We asked another question that tied into this one. We asked, “What would you like to see happen here?” and “If you could make some changes, what would those changes be?” Some of the responses were:

- “I’d like to have a better music program. The music is dead. We need to make our worship livelier.”
- “I would like to see the church more involved in the community.”
- “More outreach.”

The challenge to the congregation this past year and the congregation in the future is this: Unless we find a way to make the church more viable in ministry in the future, there is little hope for a sustainable future. We know from our surveys that there is a knowledge and understanding of the new congregational ministry method, but we cannot predict what the future holds for this congregation. However, the chances of sustainability in the future are much better than if we did not do this project. “Hope is a fruit of the Spirit, and that my friend is a fact” (1 Corinthians 13:13).

I am one among the 2,000,000 Episcopalians in the United States of America who happen to love the liturgical style of worship that is found in the *Book of Common Prayer*. We love the smells, the bells, robes and chants. We feel at home in a worship service where the altar is the central part of our worship and every other part of the worship service centers upon the altar.

We love the social positions that the Episcopal Church has taken on behalf of the poor and marginalized. We love the positions that the church has taken supporting minorities in the church, whether they are ethnic, gender or sexual preference. We like to



identify with a church that is both Catholic and Protestant in the way we worship and practice our faith.

We love the history that traces our church Fathers back to the early apostles, and the tradition that says our bishops, priests and deacons are in that *ordinand* of apostolic succession. We love the *Book of Common Prayer* that brings people of differing opinions—both theologically and politically—into a worship that is centered on common prayer, a place where differences take a back seat to communal worship.

Should these ancient landmarks be taken away or stripped from little SJEC? Not at all! That was never our intent. If anything, our intent is to restore the ancient landmarks, to bring light onto why those traditions are present, to show why those traditions make sense and to bring added value to the worship and communal experience, not take away from that experience. Two of the Scriptural ‘landmarks’ set before us in this regard are: “If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Psalm 11:3 NRSV); and “Do not remove the ancient landmark that your ancestors set up” (Proverbs 22:28 NRSV).

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **INTRODUCTION TO IMANI**

At the time I began to work on the implementation of this demonstration project, my wife, Naomi, and I were already thinking together about a project she had proposed to me two years ago. We had been brainstorming about it for several months just prior to the time I completed the proposal for my demonstration project. She suggested that perhaps our brainchild, *Imani*, could be part of the demonstration project, fitting roughly under Strategy 2 of Goal #1: “a six week topical class on creating a church environment that is friendly, forgiving and nonthreatening, presenting a picture of what a church can be if we allow it to be.”

While the *Imani* we had imagined did not fit that description exactly, it was at least related in its objective; opening people’s mind to ‘what a church can be if we allow it to be’. And besides, *Imani* was still just an idea. We had nothing on paper yet. I decided it was worth considering. Since my proposal already had a place for a 6-week study, why not *Imani*?

The basic objective of the *Imani* course was to open people’s minds to:

- new ways of doing church
- new opportunities of partnership in ministry

As we began to flesh out our ideas for *Imani*, it became clear to us that this objective corresponded directly to the Challenge Statement of the demonstration project:

to lead [the church] into a new paradigm of ministry that will not only achieve the numeric growth required for sustainability, but will focus on ‘equipping the saints for the work of the ministry’.

Ultimately, *Imani* turned out to be an effective strategy that related to the full scope of the demonstration project, providing a forum for teaching from scripture and history (Goal #1), leadership training (Goal #2), and transformational experience that could change people’s idea of ministry and encourage them to share that experience with others (Goal #3).

*Imani* was designed to do this by using roughly the first two thirds of the course to look back, and to look around; first celebrating the local church, its history and legacy in the community, then expanding the focus to include its place within the Episcopal Church and Anglican Communion, then widening the circle to include both the wider Christian church and other faith traditions.

### **Opportunities for Transformational Experience**

The last third of the course looks forward, and engages participants in envisioning a future for the congregation that includes those ‘new ways of doing things, and new partnerships’ mentioned above. It is hoped that by this point in the course, participants’ experience of *Imani* will have created an appreciation and openness to other churches and even other faith groups as possible partners in ministry to the community. Articles, video and radio interviews showing what other congregations are doing to both make themselves sustainable, and to be of service to the community are part of the curriculum.

The “dwindling, financially struggling, yet committed parishes” described in the Challenge Statement are already too caught up in the concept that, “We have to do *something* or we’re going to die!” *Imani* takes a different tack.

Opportunities for epiphany, transformation, serendipity, ‘aha moments’—however you define life-changing experience that results from enlightenment—abound in the *Imani* approach. Rather than *telling* people what the problem is and what they need to do about it, *Imani* provides experiences that help people *discern* the situation of the congregation, *envision* what might be possible, and *embrace* the idea that change in what we do and who we work with can be a positive, life-affirming task, rather than an uncomfortable strategy to solve an intractable problem.

Change as ambrosia—not medicine!

## **THE PROGRAM**

*Imani* is a 6-week course, designed for use in local faith communities. Participants are encouraged to attend each of the 6 sessions, as the program is intended to be a course of study, with each session building on those preceding, and preparing for those following.

*Imani* is designed to be offered as a recurring program within a congregation, repeated at whatever intervals are appropriate for the community. The *Imani* course serves well as new member/seeker orientation, as well as adult education for the entire congregation (teens and older). Family members are encouraged to take it together.

The course material provides a foundation and introduction into the faith tradition of the congregation, starting with the local parish, including its history, current situation, and its vision for the future.

*Imani* also explores the tradition of the larger church, providing an introduction to the history and polity of the Episcopal Church and Anglican tradition, as well as that of the broader Christian Church.

Finally, *Imani* introduces participants to the faith traditions of their neighbors and fellow citizens. It is hoped the *Imani* course will lay a foundation for ecumenical and multi-faith understanding, communication and shared endeavor.

## **THE VISION**

Using presentations, discussions, videos, guest speakers, a recommended reading list, several field trips, and individual and group assignments, the intention is to provide a brief, broad introduction to the circles of faith that intersects that of the local parish.

*Imani* can only provide an elementary introduction and beginning exploration. It is in no way represented as comprehensive, which would clearly be impossible to accomplish in a 6-week course that meets once a week for 2 hours!

The hope is that the *Imani* course will instill within participants an appreciation for their particular local faith community and tradition, as well as spark a desire for more study, more understanding, more communication and interaction with other communities of faith.

And it is especially hoped that *Imani* will spark a new vision for what it means to be a community of faith. In our case, what does it mean for SJEC to be ‘the church’ in Essington? What are the possibilities for ministry as the congregation moves into the future? Where does SJEC fit in the broad community of faith, and where do individual members fit within the family and the ministry of the faith community that is St. John’s?

...the Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God (Romans 8:16 NIV).

## **THE ELEMENTS**

### **CO-LEADERSHIP**

*Imani* is designed to be led each week by two main presenters, or co-leaders, with the involvement of others from time to time. The co-leaders alternate heading up the different sections during the evening. The evening might move from a short lecture and discussion format to showing a related YouTube video, to working on the timeline of the church and community, to reviewing the previous week's homework on the meaning of the baptismal covenant, then playing a music clip of a song that relates to the topic for the night, before ending with Q & A, a quick rundown of next week's homework and upcoming field trips, and if time allows, reading Compline together before the group disperses. A sample schedule and list of resources for one full session of *Imani*—a model of how an evening might progress—are included in the Appendix.

### **SHARED MEAL**

Each 2-hour session of the 6-week course was preceded by a simple, shared, potluck meal. It was hoped this would be a key-organizing element of the course, and it turned out to be exactly that. The fellowship and conversation around the table was the perfect way to start the evening's study.

It had been originally envisioned that the meal be 'provided' by the fellowship committee, as a ministry to participants, in order to put no further burden on the attendees other than to show up. As it turned out, that proved problematic for a very small congregation, and the potluck model ended up being chosen. Although unforeseen at the time, this provided several great, unintended benefits.

Participants signed up in advance to contribute food items to a specific night's meal. It was observed over the 6-week course, and then discerned in evaluation afterwards, that

participants benefited from making a commitment to bring food for the shared meal in the following ways:

- Participants appeared to be strengthened in their commitment to attend.

Example: One participant prepared and dropped off in advance the main dish casserole she had signed up to bring on a given night, even though she found out subsequently that she would have to be out of town on that night. She expressed regret that she would not be in attendance, and afterwards asked to be ‘brought up to speed’ on both presentations and discussions that took place. It is true that several of those registered for each of the 2 courses conducted eventually fell by the wayside, attending only one or two of the sessions. This is, of course, inevitable with any such course, and some had good reasons why they couldn’t continue. We observed, however, that those who signed up to participate in even one of the meals were far less likely to drop out or miss sessions.

- The commitment to bring food seemed to increase participants’ sense of being a significant member of the group.

Example: Nearly everyone in the group wanted to be sure they signed up for something; no one wanted to be left out, or to appear to be a freeloader. Even when they were not assigned to bring food, a number of people regularly came early to help set up, and nearly everyone stayed afterward to clean up. This might seem insignificant and unsurprising for church members. Upon reflection, however, it was felt that if the meal had been provided, served and cleaned up by others as a ‘ministry’ (which is not a bad thing), the participants would not likely

have had as strong a sense of ownership of the course. Their contributions were ‘needed’ every week to make *Imani* happen.

- Making a significant contribution to the success of the evening elevated them from the status of an attendee, or observer, to that of a ‘presenter’.

Example: Several participants for the first course volunteered to bring a dish for one of the sessions during the second course; as ‘alumni’ they wanted to make a contribution to the next group’s experience. This commitment grew to include several people agreeing to participate as co-presenters with the leaders for one or more of the subsequent sessions. In our evaluation, we discerned that this should be part of the on-going plan of *Imani*; to invite those who had gone through the course to participate in presenting the course to others.

Finally, a shared, provided meal helped build a sense of group identity for the participants, and made it easier for people to attend on a weekday evening after work. Simple soup-and-sandwich or soup-or-casserole-and salad menus made it easy to provide options for vegetarians or others with dietary restrictions. The last session was a pizza party, and the food was ordered in from the restaurant across the street from the church—which is owned by a member.

### **Field Trips**

We scheduled a field trip to another congregation for each of the two *Imani* groups; the first group visited a local Reconstructionist Jewish synagogue, and the second attended a Saturday morning ‘Friend’s Meeting’ at Pendle Hill, the well-known Quaker retreat/conference/study center that hosts individuals and groups from around the world. Participation in both field trips was excellent. Over 50% of each group took an entire Saturday morning (in addition to time already committed to the 6-week course), to visit,



talk to, and worship with members of another faith congregation. It was a new experience for many, and the response was overwhelmingly positive.

## **READING RESOURCES**

We had anticipated having a reading list (prepared well in advance) that would be circulated to the registered participants. It was hoped this would serve to build anticipation, and to help people begin to prepare for the course, get their ‘heads in the right place’. We planned to offer a little ‘lending library’ of books from our collection, and to purchase multiple copies of specific books we thought would be most important and interesting. However, in the end, mostly because of the time involved, we decided instead to provide a table with books, photos, or other items of interest relating to the topics to be discussed that night.

Frankly, there was not as much interest in the books in either session as we had anticipated. People might stop and peruse, perhaps pick up a book or two, leaf through the pages, then put them down and walk on. We began to realize that reading books on church history, liturgy, church growth studies, Christian mystics and the Dead Sea Scrolls may appeal to seminarians and (some) clergy, but many lay people are simply not so inclined. They were, however, very ready to engage in lively discussion after an interesting presentation on those subjects.

## **HOMEWORK AND DISCUSSION**

Our original expectation was that we would provide an engaging, meaningful homework assignment for each session, and that the following week, people would turn in their homework, and we would take some time to discuss it. Not unlike our experience with the ‘reading resources’, we found that only a few participants were interested in doing ‘homework’. So we started approaching the homework section of the class

differently. Rather than assuming people would take their assignment home, read it, and do it, we made time to read through the assignment in class, and elaborate a little on the reason we'd chosen it. And then we would add, "While we would love it if you all took the time to do the assignment and bring it back, we know that won't be possible for everyone. We do hope, however, you will all take some time this week to think about it, and be ready to discuss it next week." There were several assignments we thought were important enough for everyone to complete, and others that we decided not to hand out as homework, but set aside time in class to do together. In the end, the less heavy-handed approach worked well, and we always got a few good homework assignments turned in, and we always had great discussions.

## **AUDIO AND VIDEO RESOURCES**

We used technology that had not been employed at SJEC before. The church invested in a digital projector, and it was an important part of each session of *Imani*. In addition to pictures and Power Point presentations, we also included YouTube videos and radio interviews on subjects pertaining to our themes each week. A big favorite with the participants was the use of video blogs from the YouTube series "Father Matthew Presents," produced by Fr. Matthew Moretz, Curate of Christ's Church, Rye, NY, and a fellow classmate of mine from General Theological Seminary. Fr. Matthew has become a 'hit' on YouTube, and it is easy to see why.

The Rev. Matthew J. Moretz is the creator of the 'Father Matthew Presents' series of video blogs. The light-hearted pieces focus on issues of faith and ministry from the perspective of an Episcopal priest. The series is a close-up view of the Episcopal Church in the 21st century. Father

Matthew seeks to present the treasures of Christianity one video at a time.<sup>21</sup>

We found other good online resources in the public domain, and used the projector and the internet often. We may try in the future to employ live Skype Oovoo interviews with people around the country, or even around the world. The use of technology was something new for SJEC, and was one more subtle way of encouraging people to think about ‘what might be possible’, rather than just ‘how things have always been done’.

## **TIMELINE**

We decided to make use of a comparative timeline for showing major events in participants’ personal lives and the life of SJEC in the context of what was happening in the city, the country and the world at the same time. We used butcher paper and felt markers to make an 8 – 10 foot long timeline that we taped to the wall. It began at 1600 and went through 2050. This allowed for posting historical information of Tinicum Island dating back to the original inhabitants, the Lenni-Lenape Indians, and the first European settlers (the Swedes) in 1645. It also extended into the future, inviting participants to envision the future of the church, and their own lives. Approximately 2”x3” color illustrations with dates and descriptions of selected events were printed, laminated and affixed to the timeline each week. Markers and pads of brightly colored Post-It notes were on the tables each night to encourage participants to add important events from the life of church and from their own lives, as well as their aspirations for the future.

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<sup>21</sup> Matthew J. Moretz, “Father Matthew Presents,” YouTube video, <http://www.fathermatthewpresents.com/about.html> (accessed June 1, 2012).

Digging into the history of the community and the congregation engaged people at a surprising level. Long-time Tinicum residents and SJEC members shared events, memories and insights that strengthened learning and spurred conversation. Our purpose in using a timeline was to encourage appreciation for the history of the congregation and the community, and through a compelling ‘visual aid’ coupled with discussion, explore how what has happened in the past affects us today, as well as how what is happening now, including what we do or don’t do, will affect the future. It worked beautifully. The consensus in both sessions was that the timeline was one of participants’ favorite things about the *Imani* experience (along with supper - and the ‘Father Matthew Presents’ YouTube videos!)

### **ADVANCE PROMOTION**

In the 3-4 weeks leading up to the *Imani* course, brief announcements were made in the services, information included on the parish website, and in the parish bulletins and newsletter. Prior to the second session, several participants from the first session shared their experience of *Imani* with the congregation, and encouraged people to sign up. Registration materials were available for 2-3 weeks in advance of both sessions.

### **THE SESSIONS**

Below is the outline of the six sessions that made up the *Imani* course. Because of the focus on local history and community, *Imani* is always ‘a work in progress’. We were able to conduct two 6-week sessions of *Imani* during the duration of the demonstration project, and we made adjustments, additions and deletions to the second session, based on our experience with the first. It is envisioned that the material presented and the sessions outline will continue to change from time to time for St. John the Evangelist in Essington. And it goes without saying that if other congregations in other communities use this

model, their materials and session outlines will be different from ours, depending on what is important to them, and they too will change. That assumption is built into *Imani*. The information presented in *Imani* is not its most important element. The goal of *Imani* is *transformational experience* facilitated by the opportunity to *discern* the situation, *envision* what might be possible, and *embrace* the idea of change.

Week One      “So, Who Are We, Exactly?”

*A look at St John the Evangelist Episcopal Church, Essington PA*

Week Two      “So, Where Do We Come From?”

*A look at the Episcopal Church, the Diocese of PA, and the Broader Church*

Week Three    “He Said/She Said/Who Said What? When?”

*A look at the origins of the Bible*

Week Four     “Does what you believe about the Bible matter?”

*A look at what different Christian churches believe about the Bible.*

Week Five      “What Do All People of Faith Have in Common?”

*A look at the commonalities of the major faith traditions*

Week Six       “How Should We Live Together?”

*A look at the possibilities of shared work and mission with other families of faith*

The following description of *Imani* is reprinted from the curriculum for Session 1, and hopefully ‘sets the stage’ for the course.

### **Why this course is called ‘*Imani*’?**

*Imani* means ‘faith’ in Swahili. Swahili is spoken widely throughout East Africa as a first language, and by many more as a second language. It’s estimated that Swahili has over 80 million speakers across eight countries, and this number is growing.

The language was intentionally developed to bridge the gap between peoples, so they could communicate and do business. Wealthy and poor, illiterate and educated, Muslim, Christian, followers of native religions or no religion—Swahili puts them into a place where they can speak and be understood, gives them the opportunity to see and hear another whose life and thoughts might otherwise be invisible or incomprehensible. In essence, it is the opportunity for one to know another one.

Swahili is not a particularly complex language, or one that is hard to learn. It is considered to be relatively easy to learn compared to other languages because its grammar and syntax are fairly simple. In many places where Swahili is spoken, it is a second language, spoken in addition to a tribal or regional language or dialect. It’s everywhere and they ‘absorb’ rather than study it. Just like their native language, it seems simply natural to speak Swahili too.

### ***IMANI* AS A SYMBOL**

The Swahili language is itself a good symbol for faith; that essence of human spirituality that is universally shared. Like the Swahili language, the language and experience of faith can be a ‘meeting place’ for people from different cultures, walks of life, people with differing worldviews, experiences and values.

Swahili can also be understood as a symbol of incarnation, the means by which the sacred Spirit of God communicates and makes itself known to humanity through the ‘common language’ of human spirituality. This communication takes place between the sacred spirit and the human spirit.

Deep calls to deep  
in the roar of your waterfalls;  
all your waves and breakers  
have swept over me.  
By day the LORD directs his love,  
at night his song is with me—  
a prayer to the God of my life.  
(Psalm 42:7-8 NIV)

It takes place between one human being and another, between peoples of different faith and experience—wherever our spirit bears witness with the Spirit of God and with that of other human beings that we are, indeed, all the children of God. “The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children” (Rom. 8:16 NIV).

#### ***IMANI* AS AN EXPERIENCE**

*Imani* is intended to be an experience of exploration and appreciation of faith: my faith, your faith, our shared faith. It is also a journey into the world of the faith of others, who, like us, have been drawn by the Spirit, and have responded by living ‘faith-full’ lives, perhaps in places and in ways we know nearly nothing about. And yet, we all know what faith is; that drawing of our spirits by the greater Spirit, that sacred, holy, Spirit of God.

(A sample *Imani* session, including curriculum, leaders’ notes, audio/video resources, reprinted articles and illustrations, is included in the Appendix).

**REFLECTION ON FOR GOALS 1 -3**

**Goal 1:** Through teaching from scripture and history, raise the awareness of the congregation to the historical and scriptural basis for the congregational ministry paradigm contrasted with the clergy ministry paradigm.

The main focus of this goal is teaching and introducing new ways of thinking, specifically through the use of scripture and history. *Imani* proved to be an excellent strategy for achieving this goal. The ability to add audio and video resources, as well as to allow participants to contribute historical information and personal reflection added to the learning potential.

**Goal 2:** Establish ten ministry teams built on the scriptural model of Ephesians 4:11, 12: “equipping the saints for the work of the ministry,” for all ministry areas of the church.

The chairs of nearly all the ministry teams in the church responded to the invitation to participate in *Imani*. This provided a venue for both teaching and experiential learning outside the more formal setting of committee and vestry meetings. Discussion and personal sharing were more natural, spontaneous and lively in such a setting. Additionally, others not in leadership were part of the discussion, which was also beneficial.

**Goal 3:** Team leaders will be able to explain, and be willing to recommend to the church the ‘congregational ministry paradigm’.

*Imani* provided a forum for joint learning and affirmation of what was learned. Even those members who did not participate have heard about it, and seen a positive response to it in those who did. What they heard and saw was more of a ‘testimony’ than



a 'recommendation'. This turns out to be an even more effective way to communicate new ideas to the congregation than having leaders stand up and tell people what they think should happen.

## **CHAPTER 7 TRANSFORMATION THROUGH EXPERIENCE**

### **TRANSFORMATION THROUGH EXPERIENCE**

Change and transformation are not necessarily the same things. Change means going from one thing, place or situation to another thing, place or situation. It can be a challenging process and rewarding, but it is not necessarily transformative or the right thing to do. The church is a business, but it's also an organic structure that is empowered not only by the members that make up the parish, but she is also empowered by God. God can be the unknown, and for the Apostle Paul, at the end of the day, the Holy Spirit is beyond all understanding. "O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!" (Romans 11:33 NRSV)

Transformation through experience was our vision at SJEC, not change for change's sake. The New Testament writers are instructive about differentiating the written Word of God with the Word of God that transforms lives from the inside out. To be a sustainable and viable church in the future, church members need to be encouraged and led into a relationship with the Living Word. It is the Living Word that combines with the Written Word to bring about transformative change, a change that is designed to change a person or church from the inside out.

The situation as I understood it at SJEC was that this parish was a historical institution in this small community, going back to 1902. Throughout the history of this

parish, people have been associating their lives and the history of their families with this parish. I recently celebrated a parishioner's 88<sup>th</sup> birthday. On the Sunday of her birthday, she came forward to share her baptism certificate from 88 years ago when she was baptized at SJEC in 1924. SJEC is full of these kinds of stories. The church is not only a landmark of the city, but she also serves as an ancient landmark for many of the families who trace parents, grandparents and ancestors that grew up and died as members of this church.

I value the history and the respect that this landmark parish receives in this community, but an interactive relationship with the God that works inside the parish and inside the hearts of individual members of the parish is needed in order to understand what a 'viable', sustainable parish is. We can teach from statistical data the urgent need for a sustainability model of church. Without the sustainable model, SJEC and similar churches are unlikely to be able to achieve equilibrium, focus on meaningful ministry, and look confidently to the future.

#### **SUSTAINABILITY VS SELF-SUPPORTING**

From the beginning of the project I have challenged the leadership team about the difference between a church that pays its bills and performs routine tasks to make sure the physical grounds are cared for and paid for, and one that is spiritually sustained. Spiritual sustainability must focus on the mind of God and the purpose of the church. On a recent leadership retreat I challenged our vestry team to examine the difference between *financially sustainability* and *sustainable ministry*. It is my personal observation that many of our old churches—those with no children and no vision for the future, yet with a large enough endowment—are already dead. The problem is they just don't know it yet.

I challenged our leadership team with the following questions:

- How are we to survive in the future as a local parish in a small community?
- What is sustainability supposed to look like?
- Are we sustainable?
- If not, what is needed for future stability and a sustainable future?
- What is the paradigm of leadership for the Church of St. John the Evangelist and what does the Bible say about the relationship between ministry of the people and that of the priest?
- Is it possible to focus on congregational development, especially numerical church growth, without destroying the traditions that this particular church embraces and loves, and if it is possible, what things will remain the same and what will need to change?

### **Sustainability**

In order to answer this question, we must ask:

- What does it mean to be a church?
- Can the members assume and maintain the ministries of the church that don't require clergy?

### **Self-supporting**

- Self-supporting is generally understood to mean a church has enough money to pay its bills
- Self-supporting is generally understood to mean having the ability to pay for a full time priest.

<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>Self Supporting</b>
Need for diversification	No need for diversification
Priesthood of all believers	Dependent on paid clergy
Needs of the community	Church needs only
Make a difference in the community	Keep things the same
Creative financing (from without)	Pledges; endowments
Pastoral Care Team does routine home visits	Priest makes all calls
Members assume leadership roles in ministry	Assumption is that ministry is done by clergy
Lay-led leadership of programs where appropriate	Clergy 'in charge' of everything

Questions that my vestry members and other members of the leadership team have been grappling with during 2011:

- ✓ Can our church work towards a model that reflects self-supporting and sustainability?
- ✓ What do you think that model would look like?
- ✓ Does our church embrace both in-reach and outreach?
- ✓ What is outreach?
- ✓ Are we involved 'hands-on' in addressing community needs, or do we focus on giving money only?
- ✓ Even if we are willing to embrace new outreach methods, such as evangelism, communication, advertising, new and different kinds of services, do we have time to grow fast enough in order to be financially 'self-supporting'?
- ✓ In what ways can we become more sustainable as a parish?

- ✓ Without involvement in community needs, does this church have a sustainable future?

This was our challenge to the leadership team of SJEC, and here is how we went about addressing this problem. I challenged all of my leaders to think about a sustainability model and also about a congregational ministry paradigm vs. a clergy ministry paradigm model. It is encouraging with some of the results that came out of these gut-wrenching challenges with no easy answer, just mainly questions and an encouragement to find possible solutions for a sustainable ministry now, as well as in the future. I will share a few of those success stories that came from our leaders.

## **YOUTH MINISTRY**

SJEC has been blessed to have two youth leaders who grew up in the church. They were both post-graduate twenty-something women that co-chaired the leadership of the youth at SJEC. One of them, who is on my vestry and at the vestry retreat, struggled with the question of viability and sustainability for the church youth group. She was frustrated because of the inconsistent numbers at youth events. Sometimes only two or three students would show up, sometimes nobody, and sometimes for fun outings many more from outside the community would join her.

Our youth leader asked if I knew how all the other youth leaders of the Episcopal Church in our area were doing and what they were doing. I told her that I did not know, but I would support her if she wanted to contact the other churches and plan a meeting with all the youth workers at the other Episcopal Churches. And that's what she did. She contacted the Canon for Youth in the Diocese of Pennsylvania and all the churches within 15 miles from our church. We sent out mailers and had our first grassroots meeting. At

the meeting, youth leaders from five churches planned the next three joint meetings and big Spring bash party.

At our next meeting we filled up the basement of one of our area parishes with teenagers, youth workers and parents. The group is scheduling months in advance and now it's like a snowball coming down a mountain. And all this happened because I challenged one of our leaders to think about making sure her ministry for SJEC was viable and sustainable for the future, and told her to come up with the answer. And she did.

### **BREAKFAST CLUB**

SJEC is in a small community, and except for the people that live here, most people only drive by Tinicum Township on their way to the International Airport. I challenged our outreach team to find a way we could get involved with homeless people. One of our members was volunteering at a breakfast kitchen for homeless people in Wilmington, Delaware, about a fifteen-minute drive from our parish. A few of us volunteered to make the trip a couple times in 2011, and now there is a group of volunteers that help staff the breakfast kitchen the first Saturday of every month.

### **WELCOME CHURCH**

We are a 15-minute drive from downtown Philadelphia. When I moved here two years ago, I immediately started working with a team of clergy to minister to the homeless at Logan Park Square with a church known as 'The Welcome Church', a church that meets in the park and is also referred to as the 'church without walls'. After working with this congregation one Sunday every month, I presented it to our outreach

team and we now have a team of volunteers that travel to Philadelphia every month to be a part of this ministry to the homeless.

This is another example of a challenge to find a way to do church that is different from the way we have done church in the past. I recently wrote about this expression of doing church differently, but still doing church in the quarterly journal for the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania. The following is an excerpt from that article.

When the foundations are being destroyed what can the righteous do? (Psalm 11:16, NRSV) Good question. One thing we all seem to agree on here at the retreat is that it's all too easy to play the blame game, to blame the congregations, the clergy, and the national leadership.

When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do? One thing we can do is to take the church to where the people are, to be the church somewhere else other than the church buildings. If the people will not come to us, then let's go to them. Does this sound to evangelical for Episcopalians? Actually anyone familiar with the *Oxford Movement* will recall it is part of our history to use our tradition in innovative ways, using our old stuff in new ways.

One innovative way of bringing our traditions of Eucharist, prayers of the people, etc...is bringing church to the people that do not go to church. Over two years ago, I began to partner with a ministry already in progress called the Welcome Church, a church that meets in Logan Square, across the street from St. Peter and St. Paul RC Cathedral, near the Philadelphia Free Library on Vine and 20<sup>th</sup> Street. We meet at 3 PM on the last Sunday of every month. Our leadership team consists of Rev. Violet Little, a Lutheran minister that is founder and pastor of the Welcome Church, Rev. Dennis Lloyd from Holy Apostles Church, Wynnewood, a Presbyterian minister, a United Methodist pastor, a choir director and myself.<sup>22</sup>

It is not unusual in this setting to minister to over a hundred people during a worship service. Have you experienced preaching in a park to a group of over 100 people without a microphone? At one of our Eucharist services we served communion to over 250 in attendance.

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<sup>22</sup> David Madsen, "Where It All Began: The Welcome Church," *Quarterly Publication of the Diocese of Pennsylvania* (Winter 2011), 9.



Our altar consists of a fold-up table with white linen, wooden cross, hard wafers and grape juice. Our liturgy is simple, yet consistent, and if you were Episcopalian or Lutheran, you would feel quite at home with the liturgy. The prayers of the people can be quite vocal, yet meaningful for people living on the margins of our society. Our choir director, Waverly Alston, has done a fantastic job of forming a choir from those living in shelters, on the street or in marginalized living quarters. What they may lack in classical training, they make up with enthusiasm and volume. And then some!

What I see in this expression of faith is opportunity to share all the gifts of God for all his people. What I also notice is that the 30 to 40 volunteers from housed congregations who show up to share coffee, hand out coats, socks and hot soup, are starting to get to know the unhoused members of the congregation. They are becoming a community. The service lasts about 45 minutes, but the coffee time lasts over an hour. And, for a short time on a Sunday afternoon, we all come together to enjoy each other's presence and the presence of God. So, what is happening? We are 'doing church', but we're doing it differently. But we are definitely doing church.

Prior to moving to the Philadelphia area I was part of a ministry that established park churches in NYC. Someone once told me that we were going about our work in the wrong way. I replied: "You know you might be right. But we are doing the best we can, and we are involved and learning every week. Perhaps you can help us understand better. Hey, we're open to new ideas! Who gets to decide the wrong or right way to be the church outside of our buildings"? Who gets to decide the boundaries of creativity and innovation, of using our 'old stuff' in new ways? We do! Those willing to take risks; those willing to try to answer the question: When the foundations are being destroyed what can the righteous do? Because the answer

It remains to be seen!<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **MINISTERIAL COMPETENCIES**

#### **MINISTERIAL COMPETENCY ONE: LEADER**

##### **STRATEGY 1 - ORIGINAL PERSONAL STRATEGY**

Schedule a personal four-day quiet retreat in January 2011. The retreat will be used for prayer, envisioning and writing down a clear map for the future of the project. Scheduled quiet times are essential for me in leading others into unfamiliar territory that may make them uncomfortable and to provide a leadership model that is understanding, patient and encouraging. They create a congregational environment that is friendly, encouraging, exciting and motivating.<sup>24</sup>

#### **How I Completed the Personal Strategy**

I scheduled and enjoyed a four-day quiet retreat at St. Raphaela Retreat Center located in Haverford, Pennsylvania. I used the retreat for prayer, envisioning and attempting to write down a clear map for the future of the project. I continue to find that scheduled quiet times are essential for my leadership responsibilities, especially in leading others into new areas they find uncomfortable and threatening. That was the first of three quiet retreats in 2011. I believe that my spiritual life and life of spiritual practice are essential in my ability to lead others into transformational change.

The classical disciplines of the spiritual life call us to move beyond the surface living into the depths. They invite us to explore the inner caverns of the spiritual realm. They urge us to be the answer to a hollow world.

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<sup>24</sup> Randall Peterson, ed., *Leading and Managing People in the Dynamic Organization* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2003), 185-199.

John Woolman counsels, “It is good for thee to dwell deep, that thou mayest feel and understand the spirits of people.”<sup>25</sup>

During this project I experienced a new appreciation for patience. Maybe we could call this ‘leading by waiting around’. You cannot put people and churches into a time frame and expect it to work out the way you want and when you want. I learned that it is an honor and privilege to work in the planning of ‘church’ for the future. It is an honor to be permitted to be a participant in a unique journey of church renewal that goes back almost 2,000 years.

It was my destiny to join in a great experience. Having had the good fortune to belong to the League, I was permitted to be a participant in a unique journey.<sup>26</sup>

In this project I gained a greater sense of the worth of others, taking genuine pride in the leaders in my charge, recognizing unique strengths and accomplishments. I’ve gained more respect for the value of establishing an atmosphere and cultural venue that balances freedom with responsibility and structure, and have begun to look for creative ways of providing opportunities for self-expression. I do not believe we have to look far for uniqueness in individuals. Each person is a unique individual and has ways of expressing and giving that are unlike any other person. We need look no further than the person right in front of our face.

Scientific advances have provided us with a radically new understanding of variations of brain function. We must apply that knowledge to help all kinds of minds contribute to our society in all kinds of constructive ways. We must acknowledge and celebrate diversity of minds and usher in a new era of neurodevelopment pluralism.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* (San Francisco: Harper, 1988), 1.

<sup>26</sup> Hermann Hesse, *Journey to the East* (New York: Nonesuch, 1956), 3.

<sup>27</sup> Mel Levine, “Teaching All Kinds of Minds,” NPR, [www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org), January 24, 2005 (accessed November 13, 2011).

### **How this Strategy Helped with this Project**

I have an ability to work in unfamiliar territory and that helps me to be patient and understanding in helping others find their way. I believe this is my personality, but I also know that working over 30 years in sales and entrepreneurial environments aided in my abilities to lead in a transitory environment.

### **Strategy 2 - Original Personal Strategy**

Throughout the project, beginning in January and ending in July, Candidate will schedule monthly counseling sessions with an established clergy leader, either in person or on the phone. This will enhance my counseling sessions to individuals and small groups to introduce the 'congregational leadership' model of church growth and development. Candidate will also include articles in the monthly church newsletter that is circulated by mail, email and posted on parish bulletin boards, tables and reading racks in the back of the church.

### **How I Completed the Personal Strategy**

I did not schedule monthly counseling sessions with one established clergy leader. I did get counsel from multiple leaders. It would have helped to have a spiritual director or someone I could talk over things with, but I did not have a spiritual director at this time. I did meet with my bishop on two occasions, and with two other clergy that I have a good working and talking relationship with. This did help me to stay focused on the project and to have eyes from the outside looking in.

I did follow through with one-on-one sessions and teaching opportunities on the subject of congregational leadership with many of the church leaders at SJEC. I have found that the one-on-one meetings were the most beneficial for my project. I also did

follow through with monthly articles in the newsletter, sermons and group teachings concerning the congregational ministry paradigm vs. the clergy ministry paradigm.

I focused during the six months of this project upon leading others through to a better understanding of a scriptural basis for active faith transition of healthy church growth, with a continued emphasis of modeling Scripture as a mirror that that God uses for leading individuals and communities to broaden world-views.

### **How this Strategy Helped with this Project**

I developed a closer relationship with the leaders of the congregation by spending more time with them in one-on-one meetings. I found that when they realized I cared about them not just because we needed their input in the church, but because we valued them as individuals of value and worth, they responded positively to being led into new territory.

Every person is important. We are called to be leaders. Everyone has certain gifts and abilities that are tailor-made to suit their personality. True leadership will encourage these gifts and abilities, and utilize them, both for the benefit of the church and for the benefit and fulfillment of each individual person

A servant leader is someone who serves others by working on their behalf, in order to help them fulfill their goals, not the goal of the leader.

Serving others is the primary motivation for the servant leader; Servant leadership has been accomplished when group members become wiser, healthier, and more autonomous.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Dubrin, *Leadership*, 106.

### **Strategy 3 - Original Personal Strategy**

Spend two hours a day, reading and interacting with leadership styles and church models. Interact with secular leadership models and scriptural models. Develop my leadership skills through a deeper understanding of the scriptural basis for ‘faith and action’ (James 2:14-26) that will contribute to healthy spiritual growth, with a continuing emphasis on modeling Scriptural principles, as a mirror that God uses for leading individuals and communities to broaden world-views (James 1:23).<sup>29</sup>

To lead classes, leadership team meetings and vestry meetings with an emphasis on church growth and development. To create a church environment that allows for mistakes, yet relies on team leadership for accountability, and provides adequate training for ministerial functions.

### **How I Completed the Personal Strategy**

While I did not spend precisely two hours a day reading and interacting with leadership styles and church models, I did read extensively about church leadership models of change, emergent church writers, books on ancient worship and books of the changing face of worship in the church. Many of the books I read on this project will never make it to the pages of this paper, but they were invaluable from multiple perspectives of the Christian church.

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<sup>29</sup> Larry Spears, ed., *Insights on Leadership* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1996), xii-xviii.

### **How this Strategy Helped with this Project**

I have appreciated the Bible as my source and daily guide for spiritual nourishment and counsel. The practice of spending at least an hour a day reading scripture and spending time in prayer and thoughtful mediation has been a practice of mine for years, and unless something drastic happens to my health or wellbeing, that practice will continue for the rest of my life.

During the project timeline one of my focuses was to lead others through to a better understanding of a scriptural basis for active faith transition of healthy church growth, with a continued emphasis of modeling Scripture as a mirror that that God uses for leading individuals and communities to broaden world-views.

My personal daily devotional time is essential for this spiritual transformation ministry. Without it I would not have the spiritual strength or understanding to pass anything of spiritual worth onto others. I would be like a car trying to go down the road with the gas meter on empty.

### **Strategy 4 - Original Personal Strategy**

From February to July 2011, Candidate will schedule two-hour visits, reading books and magazine articles, at least once a month in the library of a recognized church leader that is familiar and respected in congregational leadership development. This personal time with books and related periodicals that will contribute to this project will be useful for Candidate in starting his own lending library available to team leaders with books and magazine articles, applicable to the ministry project.

### **How I Completed the Personal Strategy**

Although I adjusted my strategy here, I feel the result was positive in the long run. I spent some time in one leader's library, but I spent many more hours and a sizable investment developing my own library on congregational development, church growth, the emerging church, center-set churches, visioning, administration, denominational practices, transformation and leadership development. I feel I am just at the beginning of my study of this field, and am motivated to continue.

### **Strategy 5 - Original Personal Strategy**

Beginning in December, seek out and find training on developing a better interactive website, better email newsletter, and a better working understanding of other media resources, such as Face book and Twitter.

Our website has been a work in progress. We do have a blog page. We do have a monthly newsletter and we do have a Facebook account. Our website is in the final stages of development and should be up and running by the end of this week...after the project. I know, but we started this revamping during the project. The Facebook page and Twitter will also be revamped once our new website image is introduced to the public.

### **How this Strategy Helped with this Project**

Even though we are not all that talented in website design and IT skills, the original strategy has propelled us to create a Communication Committee for SJEC. This committee was started in the first month of the project. Before this committee was introduced, all communication was handled by particular individuals within specific committees. There was very little 'cross-team' communication, and even less 'all-church' communication. Rather, people communicated only in their own particular silo.



Announcements at the end of Sunday service and reports delivered at Vestry and Annual Meetings were the typical means of communication. This committee has focused on all communication in the church, both internal and external.

### **Evaluation - Original Personal Strategy**

From February to July Candidate will review and refine as necessary his understanding and expression of the 'congregational leadership paradigm' model. At the end of three months Candidate will submit a report to site team to let them know how he thinks the directive vision of the local church and whether or not his view is in alignment with the original vision. At the end of six months, all the team leaders should be able to verbally describe, and identify with the project mission and directives.

### **How I Completed the Personal Strategy**

At the end review of this project, I feel confident and have confirmed through an end of project survey that the majority of our church leaders understand and will promote the clergy *leadership paradigm* and not the *clergy ministry paradigm*. That does not mean there will not be lapses back into the old paradigm, or that the changes are complete. This is a work in progress, but the change is in the structure and in the momentum of the churches progress forward. Unfortunately, there are some people at SJECC, maybe only a handful in any leadership position, who have not participated and have no interest in any change in their understanding of church as they have always known it. We have been able to accept them and love them, but to tactfully work around them and move forward.

### **How this Strategy Helped with this Project**

In change there is always some chaos, hurt and confusion, especially when going from what we know to something or somewhere that we do not know. It is not easy to move into unknown areas or ways of doing things that are different than what we are used to. Are the leaders of the church comfortable with the change and transformation process that accompanies the new direction for the church? Are they able to write out the new directive vision of the local church that is in line with mine? Are they able to communicate that vision in words to the rest of the congregation? If not, the visionary process needs to be revisited and relearned and perhaps the objectives need to be reworked.

I learned in this project that it is possible to get trapped in a critical mode, to criticize others and find fault. Sometimes I discovered that I was evaluating people by how they responded and how effectively they understood the message of change and transformation. This is another area of patience enlightenment. This project had a six-month time frame, and that is not long enough to expect dramatic changes to ways of doing things that have not changed for decades. It is easier to recognize small changes and paradigm shifts in the right direction.

Criticism has its place, but as a total preoccupation it is sterile. The danger, perhaps is to hear the analyst too much and the artist too little. Great ideas, it has been said, come into the world as gently as doves.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Robert Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Robert Greenleaf Center, 1991), 5.

## **Ministerial Competency Two: Pastor**

### **Strategy 1 - Original Personal Strategy**

Through personal study, identify models of servant leadership as taught and practiced by Jesus and writers of the New Testament epistles.

#### **How I Completed the Personal Strategy**

I spent one series talking about the early disciples and how they modeled different aspects of Jesus ministry, especially the servant model of ministry. I also spent considerable time writing newsletters, preaching and teaching about the Servant Leadership model of leadership juxtaposed to the hierarchical model that is prevalent in not all, but most of our leadership paradigm structures in secular as well as in religious institutions.

#### **How this Strategy Helped with this Project**

This strategy has been one of three topics of this project. These three concentrations are (1) Servant Leadership (2) Congregational Ministry vs. Clergy Ministry paradigm, and (3) Transformational Change and a Sustainable Future. Servant Leadership is interwoven into the fabric of the project.

The model of servant leadership as practiced and taught by Jesus has successfully been taught and delivered in multiple ways, multiple times, every week during this project.

### **Strategy 2 - Original Personal Strategy**

By January, find or start a personal accountability group, and meet together at specific times, at least twice a month.

### **How I Completed the Personal Strategy**

I did not find or start an accountability group and did not meet together at specific times. I did start a *time-out* with three other priests. One night a week we traveled out of our geographical area to a bar-restaurant and played trivia together, had dinner, enjoyed the time away and ‘let out hair down’. I found that this was helpful in taking my mind off my responsibilities and realized that we were all sharing the same types of responsibilities in our work. We did talk about my project, and I also talked about what was going on in their lives.

### **How this Strategy Helped with this Project**

The night-out with other priests was not on the original strategy list, but it has helped me maintain fellowship and accountability with fellow priests, and it has been helpful to take my mind off the project and the work of the church. So, in that respect it has helped me with the project.

### **Strategy 3 - Original Personal Strategy**

Create a *pastoral care team* that understands pastoral responsibilities, especially the purpose of modeling pastoral care, so that it can be copied and duplicated as the members of the church learn to ‘care for one another’. Hold two training sessions for pastoral care team members. In these sessions we will view videos and study the biblical premise and practice of pastoral care, ‘member to member’.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ron Crandall, *Turn Around Strategies for the Small Church* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon, 1995), 25-39.

### **How I Completed the Personal Strategy**

We created a pastoral care team in the first two months of our project. I have a trained team of five pastoral care leaders, which are also authorized by the Bishop's office, to deliver sacraments to the homebound, those in hospitals and those in nursing facilities—for all who cannot attend Eucharist services.

### **How this Strategy Helped with this Project**

The motto for our team is, “We are our brothers and sisters keepers.” This team has been an invaluable attribute to the clergy and to the church. No longer is the church totally dependent on clergy to make all the home visits. We have developed the concept that pastoral care is not just for those who are sick. It is intended to be for everyone in the church. This exemplifies Paul's pastoral advice in the Letter to the Romans, “Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep” (Romans 12:15 NRSV).

### **Evaluation - Original Personal Strategy**

Does the Candidate himself benefit from adequate pastoral care, either in the form of a pastor or mentor or a pastoral care team that he is part of? In the Accountability group that meets every month, the question must be continually raised: “Is Candidate receiving care from others, and if so, is Candidate modeling pastoral care?”<sup>32</sup>

The Leadership Team will be surveyed regularly, 2 or 3 times during the project period (using a Survey Monkey designed by Candidate) as to whether or not we are meeting our pastoral concerns and commitments to everyone in the church. They will also be asked whether or not the Candidate is modeling a pastoral role with the message of change and transformation—for everyone, not just those who have ‘bought-in’ to the

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<sup>32</sup>Kenneth Leech, *Spirituality and Pastoral Care* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cowley, 1999), 127-136.

new concepts being introduced. They will also be asked to identify any specific concerns they have regarding this model of providing pastoral care.

### **How I Completed the Personal Strategy**

I enjoyed the help in this project from a Dean of the Deanery that counseled me on several occasions. I also met with the Bishop of three occasions and his counsel was invaluable. I enjoy the company of many priests that I meet with on a monthly basis and their friendship and advice has been helpful during this project.

We have taught and spent time explaining the concept of pastoral care to our pastoral care team and to the congregation. I have been sensitive to give pastoral care not only to those that are following my leadership on changing the paradigm of leadership, but also to those that have not made any efforts to understand or appropriate those changes in their lives.

### **How this Strategy Helped with this Project**

This strategy has helped me to maintain an intensity of caring for others and modeling the servant leadership principle of leadership. “For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45 NRSV).

An emphasis on pastoral care should be evidenced in every area of leadership in the church; committees, guilds, outreach, community involvement, liturgy, worship and education. Change is difficult enough, and without pastoral care, spiritual transformation lacks the passion and purpose for a meaningful relationship with God and others.

Jesus taught that effective ministry is best done in the context of team ministry. As a community moves ahead, some people will want to remain around the routines and ways of doing things that they are comfortable with and will not want to make changes.

The newly formed Pastoral Care Team shares pastoral care leadership responsibilities with the rector. Maybe our motto should be ‘no-one will be left behind’. I think we need to visualize that each person we meet, and each person we work with in the church does not belong to us. Neither are we responsible for how they may choose to respond to our leadership and direction. We are all in the hands of the Master Sculptor.

This world is a great sculptor’s shop. We are the statutes, and there is a rumor going around the shop that some of us, someday, are going to come to life.<sup>33</sup>

## **Evaluation**

A pastor is the priest of all people, not just those that are thriving in ministry and changes that are taking place in the midst of community. Each person is an individual, a child of God and worthy of acceptance for who they are right now, not what they have been in the past or what they may be in the future. As a pastor my goal is to accept and encourage each individual. The need for pastoral care will be more explicit for people that are having trouble or do not want any changes from what they are used to, especially changes that affect the way people live their lives and the customs they are used to.

As pastor am I committed to those that are reaching out for more, for change and for transformational change? According to the leaders of the vestry and other committees, are we meeting our pastoral concerns for everyone in the church? According to my leadership team that meets monthly, am I modeling a pastoral role with the

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<sup>33</sup> C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1943), 279.

message of change and transformation? ‘Everyone’ includes not only those that are excited about changes and the new vision of where the church is going in the future, but also those that do not want any change whatsoever.

### **Ministerial Competency Three - Prophetic Agent**

#### **Strategy1 - Original Personal Strategy**

It is essential that the ancient landmarks are not destroyed as a new church model is born. As the church moves forward it is vital to reconnect with the ancient traditions and customs that define our church structure. My hope is that in our research we will find deeper meaning and insights through the symbolism and mysteries that undergird the ancient traditions of church history. “If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?” ( Psalm 11:3 NRSV)

#### **How I Completed the Personal Strategy**

I gained more insight by acquiescing to a vision greater than personal vision. I learned to sense the project as much greater than myself, to understand that I am only a part of the church, and to remember that in my building; to be gentle with chisel and hammer. What I am working on (the church) does not belong to me.

#### **How this Strategy Helped with this Project**

I have been entrusted to care for and point the church in new directions, but I am only one part of the church, and according to scripture, no more important than any other member of the church. The Benedictine Monk Thomas Merton captures this prophetic call that we are all only a part of the whole, and each part is a member of one another.

Every other man is a piece of myself, for I am a part and a member of mankind. Every Christian is a part of my own body, because we are members of Christ. What I do is also done for them and with them and by



them. What they do is done in me and by me and for me. Nothing at all makes sense, unless we admit, with John Donne, that: “No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.”<sup>34</sup>

## **Strategy 2 - Original Personal Strategy**

In our training manual templates we must hold the prophetic vision of the beginnings of the church with the future contemporary setting of the church today and the church of the future. Are the Christian traditions sustainable and if so how do we sustain those traditions? How do we maintain the prophetic tension between the ancient, the contemporary and the future church in the teachings and training seminars of the church?

## **Strategy 3 - Original Personal Strategy**

In the development of literature, communication pieces, templates and building blocks of this program, we need to keep an ecumenical inter-faith emphasis. Can this project be duplicated elsewhere, and can it be duplicated in a cross-denominational setting?

## **Evaluation**

My skill set is in observing communities and projects, and based on the abilities and means of the community, envisioning the possibilities for the community in the future, utilizing the means and gifts of the community in order to fulfill that vision. I have the ability to influence and to draw others into seeing and appreciating the vision for the community, and in that envisioning process, buying into the vision.

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<sup>34</sup> Thomas Merton, *No Man is an Island* (New York: Harcourt Brace Hovonivich, 1955), xxiii.

### **How I Completed the Personal Strategy**

In my work during this project, I maintained an eye for the future, and that future means that this project, if it is viable, will be transportable to other settings, Episcopal parishes and parishes of other denominations. My work centered on a specific Episcopal Church in the ECUSA, but my methodology was taken from the one Catholic Church, and that should be evident from my footnotes and bibliography.

### **How this Strategy Helped with this Project**

Keeping one eye on a local Episcopal parish and another eye on the wider Catholic Church enabled me to look more from the outside in and not just from the inside out. The shrinking church is not just an Episcopal problem. It is affecting the larger church as a whole. If the results of my project are not portable, then I simply addressed an individual geographical situation. I did indeed address an individual geographical situation, but I also addressed the myriad of small parishes throughout the USA that are going through similar struggles and looking for answers for being a sustainable church in the future.

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS**

In the beginning of this project my concern was more about ‘fixing’ the broken parts of the church, and reimagining a vision for the church to embrace and to go forward together. At the end of the project I have discovered a new appreciation of the complexity and uniqueness of a specific local parish. The catchphrases I have heard many times: “Every church has its own personality”; “No two churches are alike”; “The face of the church is a mirror of those in the church, and that face will change with every new generation of members.”

- **“Every church has its own personality.”** You can go to a thousand websites that will say that their church has a unique personality, and then be informed why their church is different and unique. That’s not necessarily a come-on. Sometimes it can be over-exaggerated and maybe how people ‘sell’ their particular church may not be altogether true. But, the positive message is that people are happy with their church home and they want to share that home with others. There’s nothing wrong with putting out the welcome mat.
- **“No two churches are alike.”** There are many Episcopal Churches within a ten mile radius of SJEC. They are similar in the fact that they all utilize the Book of Common Prayer in their liturgy and worship. The cultures are similar because of the culture of Delaware County, Pennsylvania, in the SE suburbs of Philadelphia.

However, the similarities give way to marked differences. In the Episcopal Church we often are asked if a particular church is high church, low church or somewhere in the middle. The Episcopalians in the area know which ones are high, low and in the middle. It's easy for them to tell the difference. Certain Episcopal Churches are known for their formality. Others are known for their informality. Each one of the neighboring churches, including SJEC is recognized as having a specific and recognizable personality about the parish. All the Episcopalians in the area can tell you about and pretty much upon the specifics of the personality and culture that each of these churches mirror.

- **“The face of the church is a mirror of those in the church, and that face will change with every new generation of members.”** Just as in a marriage, the church members will shape the current personality of the parish. The parish will always carry its history, and that tool leaves an impact, but each generation will reinterpret that history and apply that history to the church. The church will be similar to the way it was 20 years ago, but it will never be like that again. Times and people change. The vestiges of the way people do things remain, and old traditions, whether right or wrong, can be almost impossible to change.

All Episcopal Churches are influenced by the ancient liturgies as reflected in the Book of Common Prayer, but there are a lot of differentiations within the rubrics of acceptable liturgy. Every church has its own particular customs of lighting candles, reading the Gospel, setting up the Eucharist Altar, the way the Prayers of the People are handled, whether psalms are chanted or read. And these are only the differences in the liturgy.

There are a myriad of other differences including how coffee hour is done after the worship service; whether children attend service or have their own service; if and when Sunday school is scheduled and a lot of other little differences in structure. One thing you don't read in the welcome messages of the church is that most of them are struggling financially and numerically. That's not only true in local Episcopal Churches, but it is also true of all Protestant Churches in the United States. There are pockets of church growth, but statistics tell us that churches are losing people at an alarming rate.

So, what do we do about it? I have introduced some principles in this paper that addresses this. We need to take another look at viability and sustainability. Sustainability does not mean that a church has to be large enough to support a full-time priest. The two year study of the Diocesan Planning Commission for the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania confirms this statement: "All our congregations should be healthy and sustainable. They do not have to be large or served by a full-time priest."<sup>35</sup>

Some of the solutions for small and struggling congregations include paired congregations, merged congregations, cluster ministries, closed congregations and congregational redevelopment. At SJEC, my goal has been to expand the horizons of the small church ministry beyond the doors of the church and to approach a fresh start by reconstructing the committees and emphasizing a leadership team ministry. The challenge of this project has been to change the paradigm structure from a clergy ministry paradigm to a congregational ministry paradigm.

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<sup>35</sup> Diocesan Mission Planning Commission, The Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania, "The Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania Commissioned Report," presented to the Pennsylvania Diocese Convention, Philadelphia Convention Center, Philadelphia, 2011, 27.

The model of leadership that Jesus modeled was ‘Servant Leadership’. Scripture, especially the life and teachings of Jesus, models a ministry that puts others ahead of you. The theme of our servant leadership emphasis in this project was taken from the Gospel of Mark. “For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45 NIV).

The motto of our project at SJEC was “Restructuring for a Sustainable Future.” This included reconfiguring all committees and teams, and supporting those changes with policy. To make room for all these changes, we had to reconfigure our church bylaws to make room for them. Most of our work in the six month project was structural changes, structuring in such a fashion that sustainability in the future is the goal.

There is a tension between planning for the future and not destroying the ancient landmarks of the past. In pursuing new and innovative ways of doing church in the future, it is our responsibility to preserve the memories and ancient church traditions that have been instrumental in shaping the structures of a particular church. It is the landmarks that we can look back on and these landmarks help define who we are as a church and where we want to go in the future, not moving on without structure, but always remembering ‘from which we came’. It is our landmarks that help point us to a future that connects us with our past.

My desire is to bring the ancient into the present, and to not only read about ancient landmarks and boundary stones, but to actually apply ancient-future worship in new and creative ways in the contemporary church. We can be true to the history and the creeds of our church, while at the same time moving to the ‘center-set’ positions of

emerging churches from a myriad of cultural and theological positions. They too are bridging the past with the present.

Ancient-future worship is not a gimmick or show of the latest adventure. There has been far too much “we need to start the church all over again” innovation since the late sixties. The church may need to be inspired, perhaps contextualized, but never trashed to start again.<sup>36</sup>

Do not remove the ancient landmark that your ancestors set up.  
(Proverbs 22:28 NRSV)

I struggled for some time looking for programs or studies that would complement a restructuring or envisioning for a small parish that was struggling to be relevant, yet hoping to keep intact the landmarks of the past. I wanted to find an interactive teaching series that would capture the essence of the Episcopal Church. I wanted to find a balance that would emphasize Scripture, tradition and reason. This is how *IMANI* was born.

*IMANI* was the name Naomi, my partner and co-developer, coined for the six-week series of lessons. *IMANI* is a ‘mini’ snapshot of my six month project. In this interactive teaching series that emphasized, fellowship, a common meal together, dialogue and teaching, we began our series on the first night by ‘examining our ancient landmarks’. Those landmarks included the local history of Tinicum Island, the local history of SJEC, Philadelphia and the Episcopal Church of the United States (ECUSA).

We learned how the historical events affected the local church, and how those events played an integral part as to where the church is at today. We look to the past in order to understand the present, and we look to the future always looking to the past and the present. We looked at ways that we are similar to other denominational churches. We also examined the differences and talked about how we can appreciate the differences in

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<sup>36</sup> Robert E. Webber, *Ancient-Future Worship* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2008), 167.

each other, and when we do that it always opens up the doors to the likenesses and similarities.

In our teaching sessions, we addressed the different ways that even Episcopalians interpret the Bible. We talked about the church as being like one big umbrella, with a whole lot of variations in groups under that umbrella, but when we come together we come together for Common Prayer. We are united by the *Book of Common Prayer*.

We talked about what is called the ‘three legged stool’ and the approach to our Christian life utilizing Scripture, tradition and reason.

In *IMANI*, as well as in our project, we addressed the concept of Servant Leadership, congregational ministry vs. a clergy ministry paradigm, and the importance of experiencing transformative change as we move into the present moment and look into the future. *IMANI* means faith in Swahili. We talked about the difference between change and transformation. Change is what goes on in the world every day. Transformation has to do with change that starts on the inside and moves outside. Transformation changes who we are and how we are to live into the future. Transformation brings about dynamic change, a change that transforms the life of the soul, the life of the church, the life of the community and the life of the world in which we live.

We saw the development of transformative change in the structure of SJEC all through this project. It is exciting to see the Spirit working alongside of us in our efforts to lead one small parish into a sustainable future. So, how did we do? Even with our best measures and mapping, we cannot guarantee the future of this small parish. What we can tell you is that there is a plan in motion. There is an envisioned body of believers that is moving both organically and structurally forward to a new frontier; a frontier that is



balanced by the old and the new, the known and the unknown. There is a new paradigm that has been introduced, and structures and policy to support that change.

Changes occur in small doses that can be overlooked when looking for larger more substantial change. It's difficult to measure radical change in a short period of time when change comes in significant but meaningful small doses. It is in these times of small changes that miracles occur and influence the future of the entire program. Can changes be accurately measurable? Can we determine significant progress towards given objectives in small increments? If we cannot, then everything I have worked on in the last year has been for naught. But if we can take the incremental changes that propel the work of this project forward in a meaningful and measurable means then I believe that I can say that this project has been a successful venture.

There is a dilemma in trying to force an agenda into an organic church that has been functioning in certain methods and cultural patterns for many years, in fact, in some areas, for over 110 years. It is not appropriate to bring changes into a congregation faster than the congregation can absorb them, and six months is a time to prepare a parish for change, but not to expect significant changes too quickly. However, the rudiments of change, the birth pangs of change that will be evident in this congregation, and in time will be identified and measurable within the lines of these project parameters, are established, measurable and subsequently planned for.

A congregation is a combined mechanism of individuals that have found meaning and purpose in culturally enforced paradigms of accrued behavioral patterns developed over a period of time. It takes a considerable time, much wisdom, prayer, contemplative criticism and emphatic understanding in order to begin and to continue to work in a

congregation of individuals than are built together on norms and patterns of behavior that are developed over long periods of time.

In the midst of all the voices that helped bring this project together, there is always the presence of the other voice. In this paper I have attempted to bring this other voice into the mix of voices. The voices that ask for attention include the voice for congregational sustainability, the voice for financial stability, the voice for creative alternatives to the way we do church, the voice for the continuance of ancient traditions, the voice for effective entrepreneurship in outreach and evangelism, the voice for redefining the word church, and many other voices that clamor for equal time. Yet there is one voice that I shall refer to as ‘the other’ that will always bring me back to the ‘now’, the present moment, that continues the reality of the sacred trust of individuals and the group that is the makeup of these individuals.

What is this voice? It is the voice of the other, the voice of reality. It is the voice of the God of Unknowing, the voice that reminds me that I do not or will not have all the answers. It is the voice of humility. The voice that says: “Be still and know that I am God!” (Psalm 46:10 NRSV).

## **APPENDIXES**

## **APPENDIX A WORKING DEFINITION OF TERMS**

For the purposes of this proposal, the following working definitions of terms will be used to represent key concepts specifically related to this project.

Sustainability: – the quality of being sustainable or viable. A church has achieved sustainability in this sense if it is ‘a church with a future’. In other words, it has developed a model of meeting its obligations—both financial and ministry related—that will carry it into the future. Sustainability is not synonymous with ‘self-supporting’ in the sense that a church has sufficient income in and of itself to meet all its financial obligations, and is served by full time clergy who provides the full range of preaching/teaching, worship/liturgical, pastoral care and other ministry traditionally performed by ordained ministers. If a congregation’s obligations are being met through a combination of offerings, gifts, diocesan or foundation grants, interest on an endowment, income generated by a ministry or initiative of the congregation (e.g. an after-school program supported by federal grants, or a community recycling program that provides a service to the community and also generates income) or any other reasonably reliable sources that can be counted upon for the future, it is ‘sustainable’. If it is adequately served by part time, shared or volunteer clergy, if it is able to meet its financial, fellowship and ministry obligations without fear of being forced to close, it is ‘sustainable’.

Committee – a group of at least three persons that takes responsibility for a basic ministry area in the church, e.g. Worship Committee, Outreach Committee, Finance Committee, Education Committee, etc.

Team/teamwork – the dynamic of learning to work together, of identifying gifts, empowering members of committees, task forces, or the congregation in general to achieve goals through cooperation. The church is served by the *structure of committees*, and the committees are enabled to do their work through the *dynamic of teamwork*

Congregational ministry paradigm – the model of ministry in which the bulk of the ‘work of the ministry’ is understood to be the responsibility of the members, with clergy or other paid staff serving as trainers, administrators, supporters of the ‘congregational ministers’.

Clergy ministry paradigm – the traditional model of ministry that revolves around the priest or pastor providing the bulk of the ‘work of the ministry’, with members of the congregation participating in support of the priest’s activities, or in tasks not necessarily identified as ‘ministry’. This view of what is the ‘appropriate’ model for ministry is often referred to in the wider church as ‘clericalism’.

Servant leadership modeling – the practice of teaching by example, leading by doing, training by serving

Struggling parish – usually a small, possibly older congregation, challenged by the unlikelihood of significant increase in financial resources or new members, even though these things are seen to be necessary for ‘survival’. Struggling parishes feel they have their back against the wall and are not confident about the future.

SJEC – St. John the Evangelist Church, Essington, Pennsylvania

**APPENDIX B**  
**DEMONSTRATION PROJECT PROPOSAL**

# **Survivor Parish – Reality Programming for a Shrinking Church**

By

David L. Madsen

## **DEMONSTRATION PROJECT PROPOSAL**

New York Theological Seminary

December 23, 2010

### **Challenge Statement**

St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Church in Essington, Pennsylvania is one of four churches in an island community of 4,200. St. John's, a dwindling, financially struggling parish, has a traditional view that the priest executes the ministry of the church. They are eager to become 'self-supporting'. My challenge as the current priest-in-charge is to lead them into a new ministry paradigm that will not only achieve the numeric growth required for sustainability, but will focus on 'equipping the saints for the work of the ministry'. Without such a ministry/sustainability model, St. John's and similar churches are unlikely to be able to achieve equilibrium, focus on meaningful ministry, and look confidently to the future.

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## **Introduction to the Setting**

### **Reflection upon Ministry**

Baseball Hall of Famer Mickey Mantle once said that hitting the ball was easy. Running around the bases was the tough part. Approaching the task of assisting a local congregation develop and grow will take more than getting a big hit. I will need to round all the bases, and only then can I say there's no place like home. And, in order to get to home base, this paper will need some 'good stuff'. As another baseball player, pitcher Sandy Koufax once said: "You've got to be lucky, but if you have good stuff, it's easier to be lucky." I certainly hope this paper has enough good stuff to send me around the bases.

The vision I want to plant at St. John's Church is this: We are a people that understand community, the Bible, basics for teamwork, and taking the responsibility for spiritual growth, and not leaving all the spiritual tools in the hands of the priests, but passing out the tools, the hammers, screwdrivers, tape measures and other resources for the work of the people. Everyone will be empowered to pick up the spiritual tools and go to work.

### **Reflection upon Mission**

The mission statement of the Church of St. John the Evangelist is as follows:

We at St. John's are part of **Christ's body in the World**. Our Mission is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ by being a spiritual worshipping community, faithful stewards of Christ's love, and proclaiming by word and deed the good news of God in Jesus Christ.

In both theory and practice, this church has a good history of combining care and support for each other, as well as for those outside the church. For example every year Saint John's (SJEC) has an annual spaghetti dinner, and donates all the proceeds from

this event to missions. \$1200 went to a local food pantry and \$1200 went to an inter-faith hospitality network that houses homeless people. That speaks volumes to those inside the church and those outside the church about SJEC's commitment to its mission statement.

### **Reflection upon Spirituality**

The church has had to learn to function without the leadership of a full time priest, because they can't afford one. They have learned to function to some extent without a priest always telling them what to do and how to carry out leadership responsibilities. SJEC has a reputation throughout the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania and the Delaware Valley Deanery as a church of committed Christians that carry out the church's commitment on a daily basis. This is a small church, but full of people that are active.

SJEC is located in an island community, and expresses support for community life and activity on the island. However, this strength of island ownership is also possibly the biggest liability for the people of the church and community. The term 'island mentality' applies here. It means that people on this island often feel somewhat isolated from the rest of the world. And frankly, some like it that way. SJEC is fairly self-centered in its understanding of needs and ministry that do not in some way affect the island. SJEC needs to be challenged to expand concerns beyond the island. However, at the same time, they need to focus even more on the real needs of this community (not just the church), and what SJEC could do to be of greater service to the community.

### **Reflection upon Identity**

SJEC is a family church, a small church that averages 65-80 on a Sunday, in two services. The church has a healthy mix of ages including 15 to 20 children, around 10 teenagers, 15 to 20 from age 20 to 40, 10 to 20 middle aged and 30 retired people. SJEC offers two Eucharistic worship services on Sunday. The 8 AM service is spoken word

only, using the older liturgical form, Rite 1, in the Book of Common Prayer. The 10 AM service is more family oriented, includes music, and uses the newer liturgical form, Rite 2 in the BCP. The church offers children's Church school for all ages, including a nursery. The first Eucharist service averages 15 to 20 and the second averages 45-60.

This church is a more *Catholic Protestant* Episcopal Church. SJEC is not as 'high church' or Anglo Catholic in their style of worship as some other congregations in the Diocese of Pennsylvania, the oldest diocese in the Episcopal Church. Maybe it's the 'island mentality', but here again; they do things their own way.

SJEC traces its beginnings to 1902. Prior to this time the ministry was a Seamen's Mission outpost to seafarers. Tinicum Island used to be a major port of entry. Part of the church building where the first service was held in 1902 was in the mission building that was started by Seamen's Institute in the late 1800's. That part of the church is still standing, and it is now the educational wing of the church. The sanctuary of the church was built in 1926.

SJEC has never been a large parish. It seats approximately 100 in the nave, a full undercroft meeting room and lunchroom, with a professional kitchen. The kitchen is utilized to the max with wonderful coffee hours and dinners, both for the church and for outreach ministries.

## **Reflection upon Programs**

The programs reflect the identity, traditions and impact of past priests of SJEC. Identity in the programs is reflected in the way the church elects the vestry, Rector's Warden and Junior Warden. Emphasis is on individuals 'in charge'. SJEC has a good reputation among the diocese and the community, and they are proud of their identity. At times with, and at other times without the aid of clergy, this church has carried on mission and work of building community. This is a positive emphasis that I want to build upon with this project.

There has been little emphasis on teamwork and expanding committees, changing leadership roles from time to time, and encouraging involvement of new people into various committees and guilds of the church.

## **Reflection upon Capacity/Resources**

SJEC is situated on a wonderful campus and has a beautiful church building, education wing and rectory, attractive and well-kept grounds. The church has never had a large congregation.

In the past 8 years, the church has never averaged more than 60+ when combining the numbers of both Sunday worship services. In 2010, SJEC Sunday services are up by 15 to 20 in attendance per week. The question this project aims to answer is, "Is it possible for a small congregation to 'be church' and to 'do ministry', with or without having its own full time clergy? SJEC is a good place to test that belief.

One of the significant resources that SJEC has is the number of children and youth that are part of the congregation and the commitment of the adults to children and youth ministries. For a small congregation this is a significant strength.

The church has a commendable history of being recognized as a positive influence in the community. There is a tradition here that the local Episcopal priest becomes the chaplain for the Tinicum Island Fire and Rescue Department. The role of Chaplain includes providing the invocation at the beginning of fire department meetings, hospital calls to firefighters and those affected by fire, visits to homes that have experienced tragedy, and other community matters as the representative of the fire department. The chaplaincy position provides the priest and SJEC an opportunity to minister in community outside of church doors.

### **Reflection upon Theological Paradigm**

One of the most significant problems has been that a number of the priests who have served St. John's in the past, even those of commendable moral character, have tended to take control of the life of the church and all the activities of the church themselves, without allowing or encouraging others to take initiative. This can be traced back to a pattern of training that many priests, including myself, have received in Episcopal seminaries. There is a tradition in the Episcopal Church that sees ministry from the top-down and not from the bottom up. This is changing in some places, but the results of this long held philosophy can be seen in much of Episcopal training of leaders.

SJEC is a working class-church. There are a few professionals in this church, but the income of the parish members reflects that of a working-class community, and our endowment fund is modest, by anyone's standards.

In the Episcopal Church there is not as much emphasis on theology and doctrine, both among clergy and laity, as in many evangelical churches. This has some positive aspects, in the sense that people are not sitting around arguing about the finer points of doctrine and eschatology. But it limits people in the sense that maybe they don't think

enough about God. When people do not have a deep desire to understand who God is, and what he cares about, it is difficult to make the case for the importance of a relationship with God, for developing spiritual practice, walking in the Spirit or even of holding to the idea that God is involved in all areas of our life. Without some sense of a personal connection with God beyond the liturgy, it is harder to make the case that there should not be a dichotomy between faith and practice, the spiritual and the secular, church and work, religious life and personal life outside the church. Christianity is not an abstract theory. The beliefs in Christianity only make sense in the midst of the struggle to love God with our heart and mind and soul and to love our neighbor as ourselves.<sup>1</sup>

In the leadership of the Episcopal Church we have a great deal of respect and reverence for the ordained clergy, bishops, priests and deacons of the church. We refer to our church tradition as ‘apostolic’, in that, at least in theory, we can trace succession of ordained leadership by the laying on of hands of ordained ministry from the bishops (only in succession), all the way back to the early 12 apostles, and including the Apostle Paul. So, we like to think we can trace our leadership back to the actual beginnings of the church. Anglicans share that belief with the Roman Catholic Church, Lutherans and Orthodox churches. We are an apostolic church, and we have high regard and respect for ordained leadership of the church.<sup>2</sup>

However, sometimes in the history of the church this theory has developed into a practice in which the priest may think that he or she knows better than everybody else and thinks that clergy should do everything in the church. And, unfortunately, clergy are

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<sup>1</sup> James Jones, *Mirror of God: Christian Faith as Spiritual Practice* (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 11.

<sup>2</sup> Vicki Black, *Welcome to the Book of Common Prayer* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Morehouse, 2007), 106-107.

not the only ones that think that. This has been a problem with parishes as well, assuming that the priest should do the work of the church, because it is, after all, the priest who knows all and is the kingpin and center around which the church revolves. He or she should lead the church and make all decisions, because priests are the anointed of God (apparently).<sup>3</sup>

While this theory of a high regard for ordained leadership has some advantages for the church, it can also inhibit church growth. And that is one of the things this project will address through the concept of team ministry and a different approach to leadership. These ideas are not at odds with the polity of the Episcopal Church. There is a respect and a reverence for spiritual authority and the priesthood. However, taken to an extreme, this leadership concept will hold the church back from healthy growth and development, and inhibit individuals from reaching out and taking on the leadership positions that are necessary for congregations to mature. The theological paradigm is a result, to some extent, of the structure of the Episcopal Church.<sup>4</sup> We structure our worship around the *Book of Common Prayer*.

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<sup>3</sup> Kenneth Leech, *True Prayer: An Invitation to Christian Spirituality* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 11.

<sup>4</sup> Phyllis Tickle, *The Great Emergence How Christianity is Changing and Why* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 2009). 144-162.

## **Preliminary Analysis of the Challenge**

### **Development of the Problem**

Churches say they want to grow and change. All churches of every denomination say this. I believe what they really mean is that they want to continue doing things the way they are comfortable doing them, but they know they need more money and more people to make that possible. Many small mainline denominational congregations know they must ‘change or die’, but subconsciously they want to be able to continue doing church in the same way as they have always done it. They may realize that’s not possible, but can’t imagine church differently.<sup>5</sup>

I want to strengthen, expand and broaden the outreach of the church. Outreach will be a targeted, once we put together committees for specific areas of ministry. Many of St. John’s committees are currently committees of one or two. That’s really not a committee. That’s someone with a job. They’ve never really worked in a committee, except for special events like bazaars and spaghetti dinners. My challenge is that there are people here that are good-hearted and hardworking, but much of the work has been individualistic without including others in areas of responsibilities. The vestry and I agree that this ‘individualistic’ approach to ministry responsibility needs to be addressed first. A sense of community and working together in team efforts must be emphasized from the beginning of this project. It is foundational.

I understand some of their reasons for leaning towards individual versus group responsibility. This is a small, old church, and many have come and gone. Also, there are certain people that only want to do certain things. Either they have not been able to get

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<sup>5</sup> Robert Landall, *What People Expect From the Church* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon, 1992), 89-103.



others to work with them in their particular area, or they choose to work alone. Perhaps some prefer not to be on a team. They may be overly protective of their ministry and not willing for others to know what they are doing. They are not malicious, but they are protective of their ministry. To a certain extent, it is true that their faithfulness and reliability have helped keep this church running even during difficult periods in the history of the church.

The concept of team ministry is somewhat foreign to many. But I believe that learning to work together will provide accountability and camaraderie, and a new awareness and appreciation of multi-faceted giftedness within the community of faith. The process will take time, patience, pastoral leadership and modeling. The individualistic model of ministry has been taught and modeled by clergy to this congregation for many years. My responsibility is to practice the model that I am introducing; to show by example that team ministry is not antithetical to the Episcopal Church; to show that neither the Church nor the Bible teach that the priest is spiritually superior to laity in rank and profile; that the priest is in charge and ministers alone, and that ministry is from the top down and not the bottom up. Servant leadership must be presented and modeled as the right way to lead.<sup>6</sup>

### **Sense of Urgency**

We do have a sense of urgency because it takes time to turn an older established church. By Thanksgiving of this year, I will have been here one year, and now it is time to make some needed changes. After our Vestry meeting in December, I will introduce

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<sup>6</sup> Avery Cardinal Dulles, *Models of the Church* (New York: Doubleday, 2002), 81-94.

plans that will begin to take effect immediately, but will be officially introduced at the church's annual parish meeting in February.

November 17 will mark my first anniversary with this church. I have been learning about the environment of this small island community, and I have begun to understand the culture in which the individual congregants live. I know the forces that challenge this island. I understand the influence of an International Airport that shares part of the island and has an aggressive plan to take over more parts of the island. Islanders are looking at the very real possibility that they will be forced from their homes and their land. I understand and empathize with these fears.

### **Systemic Change**

Right now the church is operating in a survival mode, with the attitude that 'just enough' is what is required; just enough money, just enough time and just enough effort. The challenge will be to develop a new paradigm, to plant a new vision for doing church, an excitement for church, church growth and development. There is an immediate need to introduce a 'member placement procedure' in order to get people involved, to get more people into committees, task forces, and teams so that as soon as possible everyone who wants to can find a place; a 'fit' within the church, to adopt a sense of church ownership, a sense of responsibility. It's important to get the perspective of those people that are looking into the church from the outside; as well as that of those looking from inside the church.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> George Hunter, *Church for the Unchurched* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon, 1996), 124-141.

## **Resources**

The Episcopal Church has many resources for church growth and development. There are Episcopal Churches in healthy growth modes that are not functioning in what I consider ‘the old Anglican model’, but have broken from that mold; doing things that contribute to healthy and culturally relevant church growth, adopting new sources for congregational development, but not distancing themselves from Anglo-Catholic traditions and practices that are identifiable to Episcopal faith. We will research other Anglo-Catholic Churches that have been successful in introducing environmentally relative principles of church growth resulting in transformative change, but our resources will not be limited to Anglicanism. We will also utilize the examples of other denominational and independent churches that have been successful in introducing transformative change and healthy church growth.<sup>8</sup>

## **Investment of Target Group**

I think improved communications within the church, and from the church to the community, is essential. I have some excellent communicators on my site team. I’ve got some great writers and editors, one or two people that are knowledgeable and understand how to obtain grants. I also have site team members that are experts at mobilizing people to meet the needs of the ministry. They understand that parish leaders are committed to the parish, and within the parish there are leaders among the laity to do the work of the ministry, men and women that carry their skills both inside and outside of the church to “salt the world” with their lives (Matt. 5:13). I also have two lay leaders that are members of SJEC.

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<sup>8</sup> Phillip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford, 2007), 251-261.

## **Conflicts of Interest**

I am not aware of any conflicts of interest in my target group or site team. The representatives from the church that are on my site team share the vision for transformative change and church development. They understand that change will also force them to come out of their comfort zone. Change affects the entire community, both as a whole and individually. I believe that a lot of the onus will be upon me, in educating, in implanting and sharing an informed vision for the future of the church, building excitement and encouraging eager involvement—to educate leaders, so that they in turn can educate the church and our community, so that they too can be excited about church growth and ministry.

Church growth in numbers will not be our concentration. However, it is important to remember that numbers represent people, and people are important. I believe a church growth process that begins with getting people grounded in Holy Scripture, excited about community, with a love for worship and a desire to build healthier and more intimate relationships with God and each other will also propel them into ministry to those in their community.

My ultimate goal is to introduce the ministry paradigm outlined in Ephesians 4:11, i.e., the work of the clergy is primarily “to equip the saints for the work of the ministry,” to train and prepare leaders for the future, so that they in turn can lead and help develop future leaders of the church. It is this model of leadership at the congregational level that will enable the members to ‘do the work’ of the church, whether or not a congregation can support a full time clergy person. My vision is to put most of my time

into training leaders, so that they in turn can do the work of the ministry and also train others to do the work of the ministry.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ed Stetzer, *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age* (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 96-102.

## **Research Questions**

### **Research Question One:**

What is the paradigm of leadership for the Church of St. John the Evangelist and what does the Bible say about the relationship between the ministry of the people and that of the priest? Is it possible to focus on congregational development, especially numerical church growth, without destroying the traditions that this particular church embraces and loves, and if it is possible, what things will remain the same and what will need to change?

### **Research Question Two**

Scripture tells us that Servant Leadership was preached and practiced by Jesus in the Gospels and taught in the New Testament epistles. How does Servant Leadership affect the ministry/sustainability model being developed in St. John's Church; who are the 'ministers' and who will be the recipients of 'ministry'?

### **Research Question Three**

In keeping with the Anglican theological position of the "ordained clergy through apostolic succession" and the focus on the trilogy of Scripture, tradition and reason (i.e. the Anglican '3 legged stool'); how can St. John's, within the polity and tradition of the Episcopal Church, embrace new methods of church growth and congregational development?<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Nigel Atkinson, *Richard Hooker and the Authority of Scripture, Tradition and Reason* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2005), 129-132

## **Plan of Implementation.**

**Goal 1:** Through teaching from scripture and history, raise the awareness of the congregation to the historical and scriptural basis for the *congregational ministry paradigm* contrasted to the *clergy ministry paradigm*.

**Strategy 1** In November, 2010, begin a 6 week series of adult Bible discussion classes on the first churches written and pictured in the New Testament. Discuss what these writings have to tell us about the church today.

**Strategy 2** In February, teach a six week topical class on creating a church environment that is friendly, forgiving and nonthreatening, presenting a picture of what a church can be if we allow it to be.

I will also focus on this topic, for the duration of the project, whenever possible, especially in sermons, Wednesday evening or Sunday morning Bible studies.

### **Evaluation of Goal 1**

70% of respondents will show understanding and support of Congregational Ministry Paradigm. The method of evaluation will be a combination of before and after survey (questionnaire) and personal interviews, to determine understanding of what has been presented.

**Goal 2** – Establish ten ministry teams built on the scriptural model of Ephesians 4:11: “equipping the saints for the work of the ministry” for all ministry areas of the church.

**Strategy 1** During February 2011, appoint and orient chairpersons of these committees; meeting one-on-one to counsel and describe roles and expectations for committees.

**Strategy 2** Candidate and chairpersons of each committee will develop lists of members who will be invited to join their committees.

**Strategy 3** Create workshops in March, April and May for all members of Leadership Team, and invite key speakers from area ministries known for encouraging, recognizing, motivating and opening up ministry opportunities in community ministry.

**Strategy 4** Beginning in November of 2010, evaluate the current Bylaws and regulations of SJEC. Make sure that all the changes are backed by the national church, the Diocese of Pennsylvania and the current bylaws of SJEC. Introduce changes in the by-laws that need to be made to incorporate the changes that will be affected by this project.

**Strategy 5** Write two newsletter articles in January and February about acceptance and being allowed to grow into areas of ministry without being micro-managed. .

## **Evaluation of Goal 2**

Committees will show at least a 30% increase in members over previous year, at completion of project (6 mos.) Candidate and Leadership Team will compile data by reviewing records, and current committee membership.

Method of evaluation will be observation and personal interviews. These evaluations will be written by the Candidate and reviewed by the Site Team at regular meetings, and in the monthly leadership and vestry meetings. Questions will include: How many committees have been set up? How many people in each? What concrete steps are being taken to build teamwork within the committees? What is working? What's not working? How do people feel about the congregational ministry paradigm?



Are committees beginning to take initiative and set their own goals, rather than to simply complete assigned tasks? These and other questions will be addressed with participants during monthly reviews.

**Goal 3** Team leaders will be able to explain, and be willing to recommend to the church the ‘congregational ministry paradigm’.

**Strategy 1** At the end of this project in July of 2011, hold a ‘Celebration of Ministry’ event, to be led by the Leadership Team.

**Strategy 2** End-of-project surveys (possibly using Survey Monkey or similar service) will be conducted with all members of the church willing to participate. This survey will be created by the candidate and reviewed by the site team. The results will be compiled by the Leadership Team.

### **Evaluation for Goal 3**

70% of respondents will show understanding and support of Congregational Ministry Paradigm.

## Evaluation

A. What is being evaluated?	B. Definition of Success?	C. Method or Tool?	D. By Whom?	E. When?
1. Understanding of, and commitment to Congregational Ministry Paradigm	75% of respondents score at least 80%	Brief multiple-choice questionnaire given to Leadership Team (vestry and chairs of committees)	Developed and scored by candidate with help from site team	At 3 mos. into project and at end of project (6mos.)
2. Level of understanding and buy-in to Congregational Ministry Paradigm	Observations of evaluators, including identifying potential problems	Group and personal interviews with Leadership Team	Members of site team	At 3 mos. into project and at end of project (6 mos.)
3. Growth of committees	Committees will have showed at least a 30% increase in members over previous year	Review of records, and current committee membership	Candidate and Leadership Team will compile data	At completion of project (6 mos.)
4. Follow through of committees on task of developing a written mission for the committee, and setting 2 measurable goals that contribute to the Congregational Ministry Paradigm (1 short term, 1 long term)	80 % of committees will have developed clear, measurable mission and goals within 3 mos.	Committee Chairs will be asked to turn in their committee's mission/goals to candidate by given date (@3 mos. into the project)	Candidate will compile results	At 3 mos. into the project
5. Progress on committee goals	80% of committees will have conducted their own evaluation of their progress towards goals	Worksheet will be provided to Chairs	Candidate and site team will develop worksheet and compile results	At completion of project (6mos.)
6. Level of understanding and buy-in by the congregation to Congregational Ministry Paradigm, as surveyed by Leadership Team	70% of respondents will show understanding and support of Congregational Ministry Paradigm	Method and tool will be determined and developed by Leadership Team	Candidate and site team will compile and evaluate results of survey conducted by Leadership Team	At completion of project (6mos.)

## **Ministerial Competencies**

### **Ministerial Competency #1: Leader**

#### **Strategy 1**

Schedule a personal four day quiet retreat in January 2011. The retreat will be used for prayer, envisioning and writing down a clear map for the future of the project. Scheduled quiet times are essential for me in leading others into unfamiliar territory that may make them uncomfortable and to provide a leadership model that is understanding, patient and encouraging, creating a congregational environment that is friendly, encouraging, exciting and motivating.<sup>11</sup>

#### **Strategy 2**

Throughout the project, beginning in January and ending in July, Candidate will schedule monthly counseling sessions with an established clergy leader, either in person or on the phone.

This will enhance my counseling sessions to individuals and small groups to introduce the 'congregational leadership' model of church growth and development. Candidate will also include articles in my monthly church newsletter that is circulated by mail, email and posted on parish bulletin boards, tables and reading racks in the back of the church.

#### **Strategy 3**

Spend two hours a day, reading and interacting with leadership styles and church models. Interact with secular leadership models and scriptural models. Develop my

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<sup>11</sup> Randall Peterson, *Leading and Managing People in the Dynamic Organization* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2003), 185-199.

leadership skills through a deeper understanding of the scriptural basis for ‘faith and action’ (James 2:14-26) that will contribute to healthy spiritual growth, with a continuing emphasis on modeling Scriptural principles, as a mirror that that God uses for leading individuals and communities to broaden world-views (James 1:23).<sup>12</sup>

#### **Strategy 4**

From February to July 2011, Candidate will schedule two hour visits, reading books and magazine articles, at least once a month in the library of a recognized church leader that is familiar and respected in congregational leadership development.

This personal time with books and related periodicals that will contribute to this project will be useful for candidate in starting his own lending library available team leaders with books and magazine articles, applicable to the ministry project.

#### **Strategy 5**

Beginning in December seek out and find training on developing a better interactive website, better email newsletter, and a better working understanding of other media resources, such as Face book and Twitter.

#### **Evaluation**

From February to July Candidate will review and refine as necessary his understanding and expression of the ‘congregational leadership paradigm’ model. At the end of three months Candidate will submit a report to site team to let them know how he thinks the directive vision of the local church and is his view in alignment with the original vision.

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<sup>12</sup> Larry Spears, *Insights on Leadership* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1996), xii-xviii.

At the end of six months, all the team leaders should be able to verbally describe, and identify with the project mission and directives. (See Plan of Implementation, Goal 3)

### **Ministerial Competency #2: Pastor**

**Strategy 1** Through personal study, identify models of servant leadership as taught and practiced by Jesus and writers of the New Testament epistles.

**Strategy 2** By January, find or start a personal accountability group, and meet together at specific times, at least twice a month.

**Strategy 3** Create a *pastoral care team* that understands pastoral responsibilities, especially the purpose of modeling pastoral care, so that it can be copied and duplicated as the members of the church as they learn to ‘care for one another’. Hold 2 training sessions for pastoral care team members. In these sessions we will view videos and study the biblical premise and practice of pastoral care, ‘member to member’.<sup>13</sup>

### **Evaluation**

Does the Candidate himself benefit from adequate pastoral care, either in the form of a pastor or mentor or a pastoral care team that he is part of? In the Accountability group that meets every month, the question must be continually raised: “Is Candidate receiving care from others, and if so, is Candidate modeling pastoral care?”<sup>14</sup>

The Leadership Team will be surveyed regularly, 2 or 3 times during the project period, (using a Survey Monkey designed by Candidate) as to whether or not we are

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<sup>13</sup> Ron Crandall, *Turn Around Strategies for the Small Church* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon, 1995), 25-39.

<sup>14</sup> Kenneth Leech, *Spirituality and Pastoral Care* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cowley, 1999), 127-136.

meeting our pastoral concerns and commitments to everyone in the church. They will also be asked whether or not the Candidate is modeling a pastoral role with the message of change and transformation – for everyone, not just those who have ‘bought-in’ to the new concepts being introduced. They will also be asked to identify any specific concerns they have regarding this model of providing pastoral care.

### **Ministerial Competency #3: Prophetic Agent**

#### **Strategy1**

Compile a list of reference works that emphasize models of the future church, while exploring and learning from models in church history. It is essential that the ‘ancient landmarks are not destroyed’ (Proverbs 22:28) as a new church model is born.<sup>15</sup>

In Feb. and March Candidate will develop a series of lessons via PowerPoint that will connect ancient and contemporary models of Ecclesiology that will focus on a third emerging model that combines ancient liturgy traditions of worship with contemporary models of worship.

**Strategy 2** The church is not ours to do as we see fit. The church belongs to Jesus Christ, and the leadership functions are on loan to us for a short time. Candidate hopes to maintain a balance, a *via media*, incorporating church history with the contemporary church without violating the integrity of the church.<sup>16</sup>

**Strategy 3** Beginning in January, 2011, in the development of training and promotional pieces, templates and building blocks of this program, Candidate will promote an ecumenical *inter-faith emphasis*. As much as possible, all project materials

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<sup>15</sup>Jim Belcher, *Deep Church. A Third Way Beyond Emerging and Traditional* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP, 2009), 138.

<sup>16</sup> Bede Griffiths, *The Marriage of East and West* (Springfield, Illinois: Temple, 1982), 128.

will be able to be duplicated elsewhere. Candidate will present and update ministry project with clergy from multiple denominations in the monthly scheduled *Ministeriums*. Evaluations will be handed out to the area clergy for evaluations at our monthly *Ministerium* meetings.

### **Evaluation**

Through scheduled Bible discussion groups, sermons, promotional pieces and training seminars, at the end of three months, 75% of the key leaders in the church will have a good understanding of the reasons for the Episcopal worship liturgies, including the meanings behind the most important worship traditions, icons and symbols of the Anglican Church. At the end of six months, 50% of the membership will be able to verbally identify this same information.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 Timeline

October 22, 2010	Turn in first draft proposal
November 1, 2010	Submit project proposal with team member letter and advisor notification
December 14, 2010	Present structural changes and plans for new committees wardens with Vestry
December 15, 2010	Site Team meeting.
<b>Feb. 7, 2011</b>	Begin Project Officially
Feb. 10, 2011	Meeting with Vestry
Feb. 14-18	Personal Prayer and Planning Retreat
<b>Feb. 28, 2011</b>	<b>Site team meeting. Monthly report (Met only with NY members due to illness)</b>
March 1, 2011	Meeting with my St. John's leadership team members (onsite). Assignments and analytical review. What's working and what's not working. What needs to be tweaked? Training times for team leaders and for their committee teams will be outlined and initiated.
<b>March 7, 2011</b>	<b>Site team meeting.</b> Update on committee implementations, committee chairs, team leaders, articles written, website development, newsletters, outside speakers from the community, personal retreat, Finalization and presentation of ideas and suggestions for media pieces. Present community advertising and strategic advertising plans outside of the church. <i>Imani</i> , six week project combining worship, outreach, evangelism, fellowship, leadership development and community building
March 8, 2011	Vestry meeting. Report on the progress of the project to the church leadership board (vestry)
March 13	Community organizer and ministry activist for the Chester area to speak to the church with a special



	meeting for those wanting to be involved in more outreach ministry in our area.
April 8, 2011	Report to the vestry on the progress of the project
April 15, 2011	Meeting with program (onsite) team leaders. Review the committees, progress and plans of implementation of the various pieces of the project. Tweak what is not working and reinforce what is working.
<b>May 9</b>	<b>Site team meeting</b> (Meeting in Philadelphia). Reviews and planning meeting. Evaluation of the progress and the focus.
May 10, 2011	Presentation to the Vestry of project status
May 15, 2011	Review of “template” that is to be developed along with the project as it is happening.
May 22, 2011	Meeting with leadership team. Review project status. Make changes where applicable.
June 8, 2011	Presentation to the Vestry—comprehensive review of status of project
June 22, 2011	Meeting with team leaders onsite. Template will be in its rough draft. Begin investigating prices and costs for printing, and publishing opportunity of the project. Template for leaders and template for Project facilitators.
July 8, 2011	Update with Vestry
<b>July 18, 2011</b>	<b>Meet with Site team.</b> Begin outlines and formatting—bibliography, and other necessary plans to begin writing project that will start in September, 2011
July 22, 2011	Meeting with team leaders
August 1, 2011	Update with Vestry
<b>August 29, 2011</b>	<b>Online conference with site team.</b> Final review and analyzing project SWAT. What went well? What did not go so well? How can we improve?

What are our opportunities from here? How can this work in other settings? What is unique in this setting that may not transfer elsewhere?

September 5, 2011

Final presentation to the vestry

**September 5, 2011**

**Online conference with site team. Final report and evaluation to the site team** before project is completed. Analyze. What can we change? What can we do better? How will we address those things in our final report?

September 8, 2011

Final meeting with management onsite team

September 11, 2011

Project complete

Feb. 12, 2012














Final project written report due

March 12, 2012

Oral Presentation at NYTS

## Appendix 2 Budget

### Budget for DMIN Project

1. <b>Printing Costs</b>	\$1,000
 Projected Proposals for each leader	
 Brochures for each newly formed or resurrected committees	
 Lesson plans	
 Training materials	
 Leadership training materials	\$1,000
 Congregational development materials	
 Template Productions	
 Office supplies	
2. <b>Equipment</b>	\$2,000
 Notebook computer	
 Projector	\$1,000
 Portable printer	
3. <b>Advertising</b>	\$1,000
 Print	
 Ad placements	\$1,000
<b>Total Costs:</b>	<b>\$7,000</b>

### **Appendix 3 Working Definition of Terms**

For the purposes of this proposal, the following working definitions of terms will be used to represent key concepts specifically related to this project.

**Sustainability**: the quality of being sustainable or viable. A church has achieved sustainability in this sense if it is ‘a church with a future’. In other words, it has developed a model of meeting its obligations – both financial and ministry related - that will carry it into the future. Sustainability is not synonymous with ‘self-supporting’ in the sense that a church has sufficient income in and of itself to meet all its financial obligations, and is served by full time clergy who provides the full range of preaching/teaching, worship/liturgical, pastoral care and other ministry traditionally performed by ordained ministers. If a congregation’s obligations are being met through a combination of offerings, gifts, diocesan or foundation grants, interest on an endowment, income generated by a ministry or initiative of the congregation (e.g. an after-school program supported by federal grants, or a community recycling program that provides a service to the community and also generates income) or any other reasonably reliable sources that can be counted upon for the future, it is ‘sustainable’. If it is adequately served by part time, shared or volunteer clergy, if it is able to meet its financial, fellowship and ministry obligations without fear of being forced to close, it is ‘sustainable’.

**Committee** – a group of at least 3 persons that takes responsibility for a basic ministry area in the church, e.g. Worship Committee, Outreach Committee, Finance Committee, Education Committee, etc.

**Team/teamwork** – the dynamic of learning to work together, of identifying gifts, empowering members of committees, task forces, or the congregation in general to

achieve goals through cooperation. The church is served by the *structure of committees*, and the committees are enabled to do their work through the *dynamic of teamwork*

**Congregational ministry paradigm** – the model of ministry in which the bulk of the ‘work of the ministry’ is understood to be the responsibility of the members, with clergy or other paid staff serving as trainers, administrators, supporters of the ‘congregational ministers’.

**Clergy ministry paradigm** – the traditional model of ministry that revolves around the priest or pastor providing the bulk of the ‘work of the ministry’, with members of the congregation participating in support of the priest’s activities, or in tasks not necessarily identified as ‘ministry’.

**Servant leadership modeling** – the practice of teaching by example, leading by doing, training by serving

**Struggling parish** – usually a small, possibly older congregation, challenged by the unlikelihood of significant increase in financial resources or new members, even though these things are seen to be necessary for ‘survival’. Struggling parishes feel they have their back against the wall, they are not confident about the future.

**STJE** – The Church of St. John the Evangelist, Essington, Pennsylvania.

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**APPENDIX C**  
**Sample Imani Session Documents**

## SCHEDULE FOR WEEK TWO

Supper 6:15 – 6:45

6:50 – 6:55     **Dave**– Welcome, while John collects homework, hands out survey summary (from session one).

Then, **John** does brief “Take-Away” on last week’s lesson.

6:56 – 7:12     **Dave** - Brief History of Diocese of PA and how the Episcopal Church in America got started

Transition to next section by saying, “Before John reads a few of the responses to the “My Favorite Episcopalian” homework, I’d like to introduce you to one of my favorite Episcopalians. (Play Presiding Bishop clip) “Who is that? (You’ll probably have to give answer) Last week we talked about how history affects us as a church. I thought this was a good reminder of that.”

7:13 – 7:20     **John**– read from a few of ‘My Favorite Episcopalian’ homework from last week. Hand out Absalom Jones and Li Tim-Oi bios, and show people the Feasts/Fasts book. Pull up the website below to show the variety of people honored with a feast day.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calendar\\_of\\_saints\\_\(Episcopal\\_Church\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States\\_of\\_America\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calendar_of_saints_(Episcopal_Church_in_the_United_States_of_America))

7:21 – 7:29     **Dave** – A Short History of Book of Common Prayer  
(End with ‘Father Matthew Presents the Book of Common Prayer’ video.)

7:30-7:35     Break

7:36 – 7:44     **Laura** – Introduce time line, pointing out the things added from last week about St. John’s and Tinicum, the ones from this week about the Episcopal Church, Book of Common Prayer and Diocese of PA. Invite people to add important dates from their lives, or the life of the church or community. Invite people to the next meeting of the Tinicum Historical Society (meets here).

7:45 - 7:58     **Dave** – Discuss questions from last week’s Homework re: Baptismal Covenant.

7:59 – 8:05     **John and Dave** - Wrap Up – anyone have questions, comments (brief) about the night’s activities.

8:06 – 8:10     **Dave** - Before you give out Homework for next week, play Cheers theme song clip, saying it relates to next week’s homework on people’s experience with the church.

Then mention upcoming field trips (to the synagogue and/or a Friend’s Meeting).

Finish with, “Next week we’ll look at the world-wide Anglican Communion, and the Church universal, the ‘big house’, the ‘holy, catholic church’”.

**“Last Week in Imani, we talked  
about  
...uh, give me a minute –  
It’ll come back to me...”**



**So - what was  
the 'take-away'?**

Did I learn something I didn't know before?  
If so, what?

The best thing about the session was....

I would have like more.....

I could have done with less.....

My overall feeling about last week's session is....

In the future, I suggest that for Session (?)...

Use the large illustration on the following page to produce a sheet (see left) on an easel pad for use in class discussion at the beginning of every session.

### **Leader:**

Short answers are best. Don't think too hard about it. We're looking for 'first impression', 'gut-level-feeling', 'off-the-top-of-the-head' responses.

1. Did I learn something I didn't know before? If so, what?
2. The best thing about the session was....
3. I would have like more.....
4. I could have done with less.....
5. My overall feeling about last week's session is....
6. In the future, I suggest that for Session (?)...



## **Session 2**

Notes for Presentation/Discussion on:

### **History of the Oldest Episcopal Diocese in the US and Brief History of the ECUSA**

**1634** Swedes and Dutch settle in what is now Pennsylvania.

**1680** Quaker William Penn receives a charter granted from King Charles II.

**1695** Thirty-nine Anglicans receive permission from Bishop of London to form Christ Church at Second Street above Market

**1700** The English Society for the Propagation of the Gospel sends missionaries to Pennsylvania to new start congregations. Eleven still in existence in the Diocese of PA

**1702** St. Paul's Chester, a charter parish of the diocese is established.

**1776** The Anglican Church (the Church of England) is the 2nd largest denomination in the Colonies (behind the Congregationalists), boasting 400 Congregations and 300 clergy. It is estimated that 45% of clergy supported the Revolutionary Cause, and 50% of those signing the Declaration of Independence were Anglicans. After the Revolutionary War, the Church of England in America was disestablished, making way for the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States.

**1784** Samuel Seabury, first Bishop of the Episcopal Church, is consecrated in Scotland. Seabury, an English loyalist, is nonetheless, turned away in England for episcopal consecration. He travels to Scotland to be consecrated by "rebel," non-jurying bishops in 1785.

**1784** The Methodist societies of the Episcopal Church brake away to become their own denomination, led by brothers, John and Charles Wesley.

**1784** Following the Treaty of Paris in 1783, sixteen PA parishes are called together at the first Diocesan Convention.

**1787** Bishop White consecrated as Bishop of the Episcopal Church in the US.  
Today 17 colonial congregations can trace their history back to the 17th and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**1785** The First General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in USA  
Constitution and Prayer Book drafted.

**1787** William White of Pennsylvania and Samuel Provoost of New York are consecrated as bishops in England in 1787.

- 1789** The constitution of the United States of America and of the Episcopal Church is ratified. William White is chaplain to Continental Congress and main drafter of ECUSA Constitution. The new church's full name is the Protestant Episcopal Church of America.
- 1792** The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas started by Father Absalom Jones, the first Episcopal priest in the nation.
- 1817** General Theological Seminary is organized.
- 1865** During the Civil War the Episcopal Church was necessarily disunited, but at the General Conference of 1865 is a full reunion of Northern and Southern churches.
- 1919** The General Convention creates the National Council, later called the Executive Council, which absorbs the Missionary Society and other societies for education and social concerns.
- 1946** The General Convention designates the presiding bishop as the chief pastor and primate of the church, and removes the requirement that the presiding bishop also function as a diocesan bishop.
- 1967** The Church removes the word "Protestant" from her name.
- 1974** The first women were "irregularly" ordained priests in the Episcopal Church.
- 1979** The current Book of Common Prayer is published.
- 1982** Current Hymnal is approved.
- 1993** Mary McLeod becomes the first woman to be ordained as Bishop in the Episcopal Church
- 2003** New Hampshire elects Gene Robinson, the first openly gay bishop. He is ratified at General Convention with more than some controversy, which still exists.

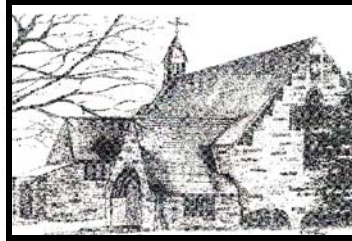
**Imani Time Line**  
Sample Illustrations for  
St. John the Evangelist  
Episcopal Church,  
Essington PA  
and Tinicum Island



**Absalom Jones**  
**1795** Ordained Deacon  
**1802** Ordained Priest  
In Philadelphia, by the  
Diocese of Pennsylvania  
*"Where it all began"*



**1902 Mission of St. John  
The Evangelist  
Essington PA**  
Started by The Rev. Francis  
Steinmetz (Christ Church,  
Ridley Park), and layman,  
Lewis Downing in the  
Seaman's Library Building



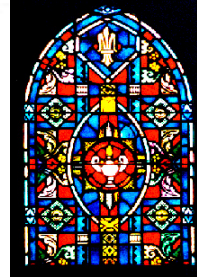
**1929 Cornerstone of  
New Church  
Building laid** Structure  
completed in 1930



**1958 Church of St.  
John the Evangelist  
granted full parish  
status**  
in union with the  
Convention of the  
Diocese of Pennsylvania



**1994 Wheel-Chair  
lift installed**



**1960's Stained Glass  
Windows Installed**



**1643 Lt. Col. Johan  
Printz** commissioned  
governor of New Sweden  
on Tinicum Island



**Before 1600 The Real  
Owners of Tinicum  
Island** the Lenni-Lenape  
Indians. The name means  
"the real people"



## Session 2

### About Absalom Jones...

**Founder of the  
African Episcopal Church  
of St. Thomas  
1746-1818**

Absalom Jones was born into slavery in Sussex County, Delaware, on November 6, 1746. He taught himself to read and knew the New Testament thoroughly at an early age. When he was 16, Absalom's owner took him to Philadelphia, Pa., where he served as a clerk and handyman in a retail store.



THE REV. ABSALOM JONES

He was allowed to work for himself in the evenings and keep his earning. He was married in 1770. By the time Jones was 38 years old he had purchased his wife's freedom, and his own, and had bought a house. Later he built two more houses and used them for rental income.

During this period he met Richard Allen, and they became lay preachers in St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church and lifelong friends. Their efforts met with great success, and the congregation multiplied tenfold.

Jones and Allen, in 1787, organized the Free African Society. The Society was both religious and benevolent, helping widows and orphans and assisting in sick, relief and burial expenses, and the assimilation of newly freedmen into urban life. Because of racial tensions and an altercation with church officials, they left St. George's congregation.

In 1792, under the leadership of Absalom Jones, "The African Church" was organized as a direct outgrowth of the Free African Society. In 1793, the two men organized the Black community to serve as nurses and attendants during Philadelphia's severe Yellow Fever epidemic.

In 1794, "The African Church" building was completed and dedicated on July 17th of that year. Absalom Jones led his African Church in applying to Bishop William White for membership in the Episcopal Church. On Sunday, September 14, 1794, the congregation was received into the fellowship and communion of the diocese of Pennsylvania. The following year the Diocesan Convention approved the affiliation with the stipulation that the Church could not participate in the Diocesan Convention this was not resolved until 1864. So "The African Church" became The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas, and Absalom Jones was ordained Deacon. Some nine years later he was ordained Priest, becoming the first priest in America of African descent. In 1797, when the first African Masonic Lodge of Philadelphia was warranted, Absalom Jones was installed as First Worshipful Master and in 1815 he was elected the First Grand Master of the First African Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania.

During his ministry, Absalom Jones never lost his deep conviction that religious and social action go hand in hand. He founded schools for his people, helped them in distress, and supported them in their protest against slavery and oppression. He helped to found an insurance company, and a society which fought vice and immorality. Absalom Jones died at his home, 32 Powell Street, Philadelphia, Pa., on February 13, 1818. In 1973, the 64th General Convention of the Episcopal Church added his name to the Church calendar as an optional feast to be celebrated.

## Session 2

### Li Tim-Oi's Story (1907-1992)

At her birth in Hong Kong on 5 May 1907 Li Tim-Oi's father called her "Much Beloved" because he valued her as a daughter even if others preferred sons.

When she was baptized as a student, Tim-Oi chose the name Florence after Florence Nightingale, the famous 19th century English nurse known as 'the Lady of the Lamp'. In 1931 at the ordination of a deaconess in Hong Kong Cathedral, she heard and responded to the call to ministry. She took a four-year course at theological college in Canton. She was made Deacon on Ascension Day 1941, and was given charge of the Anglican congregation in the Portuguese colony of Macao, thronged with refugees from war-torn China.

When a priest could no longer travel from Japanese-occupied territory to preside for her at the Eucharist, for three years Tim-Oi was licensed to do so as a deacon. Bishop R O Hall of Hong Kong then asked her to meet him in Free China, where on 25 January 1944 he ordained her "a priest in the Church of God." He knew that this was as momentous a step as when the Apostle Peter baptized the Gentile Cornelius. As St Peter recognized that God had already given Cornelius the Baptismal gift of the Spirit, so Bishop Hall was merely confirming that God had already given Tim-Oi the gift of priestly ministry, but he resisted the temptation to rename her Cornelia.

To defuse controversy, in 1946 Tim-Oi surrendered her priest's license, but not her Holy Orders, the knowledge of which carried her through Maoist persecution.

She resumed the practice of her priesthood in the Church in China, and in Toronto when she retired in 1981. She was awarded Doctorates of Divinity by General Theological Seminary, New York, and Trinity College, Toronto.

She died on 26 February 1992 in Toronto and is buried there.



*Li Tim-Oi, her mother, Bishop Mok, her father, Archdeacon Lee Kow Yan after her ordination as Deacon by Bishop R O Hall at St John's Cathedral Hong Kong. Ascension Day 22 May 1941*

## Session 2

Notes for Presentation/Discussion on:

### **History of the Book of Common Prayer**

#### **1544** Cranmer's Task

Cranmer instructed to write prayers and a litany (for the army) in English. He does this so well that he is asked to make a prayer book in English, based on the service at Salisbury Cathedral.

#### **1548** English Prayers

Prayer of Humble Access, for the people to say in English, introduced into Latin mass.

#### **1549** First Book of Common Prayer introduced

First Book of Common Prayer (Cranmer's work), introduced on Day of Pentecost. It is written in English, emphasizes the people's participation in the Eucharist, and requires the Bible to be read from cover to cover. Fast days are retained (supposedly to help fishermen), but saints' days are not. Roman Catholic rebels in Cornwall claim they cannot understand English.

#### **1552** BCP revised

Book of Common Prayer revised to suit Protestants. No more "real presence" at the Eucharist (the "black rubric" permits kneeling, however). No vestments, no signing of the cross at confirmation, no holy oil, no reserved sacrament, no prayers for the departed.

#### **1559** BCP revised

Book of Common Prayer revised. Elizabeth I reintroduces the surplice, explaining that it is a clergyman's uniform. The Black Rubric is gone. A special license is required to preach. There is no church music except metrical psalms sung to ballad tunes.

#### **1604** BCP revised

The only change is an expanded catechism. The sacraments are "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace". At the Eucharist, "the Body and Blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful."

#### **1637** Scottish Prayer Book published

Scottish Prayer Book published. (This is unpopular in Scotland, though it does call priests "presbyters". It will be the basis for the future American Prayer Book.)

#### **1662** The Act of Uniformity

"Act of Uniformity" makes it impossible for Anglican bishops to continue in communion with other Christians whose ministers lack apostolic succession.

#### **1662** BCP revised

This revision of the Book of Common Prayer makes many practices optional, and reintroduces many saints' day. This book remains in use by some churches today.

#### **1785** The First General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA

Constitution and Prayer Book drafted.

#### **1789** The fledgling Episcopal Church, meeting in Philadelphia, adopted the first American Book of Common Prayer.

#### **1883** BCP revised

**1928** This edition of the [American] Book of Common Prayer was reproduced from a certified edition of The Book of Common Prayer, as adopted by the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in 1928, and amended by subsequent Conventions.

#### **1979** The latest edition of the BCP is produced, and remains in use today

Compiled Responses to the Survey from Week 1

How did you first hear about St. John's?

*Through a friend, from my husband, in-laws were married here, from my son, thru a neighbor, from a minister, I lived down the street, from family, I'm a life-long member, visited with deanery youth group in '58*

Why did you come?

*My old church was changing, my parents, for fellowship, my kids went to Sunday School, for a change, my family, to bring my daughter to Sunday School, to find a church home, got married, had a baby and wanted to be part of a church, to get my daughter baptized*

Why did you come back?

*To regain my 'roots', I love it, felt comfortable here, I liked it, joy, fell in love with the church, enjoyed the people, felt welcomed, sense of community, was welcomed the first week, felt the need for my family to be part of a church*

If you are a member, why did you make a decision to make St. John's your church home?

*Was encouraged to grown in ministry and service, its history is my history, felt part of the family here, close to home, my friends are here, family that prays together stays together, it renews my faith, it 'fits' me, it's a welcoming community, small family-feeling, love the church and church family*

What reasons would you give for others to visit?

*Opportunity for mission and ministry, fellowship, friendly people, joyful place, stewardship, a friendly and spiritual place, family-like parish, it's comfortable and easy-going, close-knit, good for kids*

If St. John's is around in 10 years, what will it look like? What do you expect will be the same? How might it be different?

*More families, more activities, maybe a different kind of service, more inclusive, don't know, hopefully it will be similar to what it is now with more generations of families, I don't feel it will change, probably the same, maybe more diverse, the same but with some 'progress', it will not have a priest  
(Note: quite a few people did not answer this question)*

Does St. John's 'need' more people?

Why or why not?

*Need more to stay alive, need new ideas pumped into the church, to keep up with the times, we want to share, we should reach out as much as possible, don't know that it needs more people, always room to expand, the 'great commission' says so*

If St. John's is to grow in size, that is, if more people are to join the congregation, how will that happen?

*More opportunity to 'be involved', focus on families, members live like Christ, through outreach, it will make the town a better place, word of mouth, thru pastor and parishioners, love for the church*

What is your favorite thing about St. John's?

*Friendly, accepting, mission to needy people, Eucharist and fellowship, (six people said) the people*

In your opinion, what is the most important reason St. John's exists?

*For the community, Jesus loves us, for needs of community, share the love of Christ, worship God in a caring environment, (2 people said) the people, renew and energize our faith in God, perseverance, support in life, families worshipping together, love for the are*

## SESSION 2

### Homework for Week 3

#### “The Big House”

1. Have you ever been a member, regular attender or visited at a church other than Episcopal? If so, what kind? (you can talk about several, or just pick one)
2. Did you feel comfortable there? Why or why not?
3. What are the major differences (if there are any) you noticed between a non-Episcopal church you've attended and St. John's?
4. From what you know of other kinds of churches (denominations or individual congregations you are familiar with), do you think St. John's worship or congregational life would benefit from 'borrowing' something from them? Things like music, different liturgy, number or time of services, events, small groups, activities, - whatever they do well that we could borrow.

You can choose to write about these questions, or just think about them and come prepared to discuss.

## SESSION 2

### Homework for Week 3 Compiled responses to #4

#### “The Big House”

1. Have you ever been a member, regular attender or visited at a church other than Episcopal? If so, what kind? (you can talk about several, or just pick one)
2. Did you feel comfortable there? Why or why not?
3. What are the major differences (if there are any) you noticed between a non-Episcopal church you've attended and St. John's?
4. From what you know of other kinds of churches (denominations or individual congregations you are familiar with), do you think St. John's worship or congregational life would benefit from 'borrowing' something from them? Things like music, different liturgy, number or time of services, events, small groups, activities, - whatever they do well that we could borrow.

We do all things well  
Contemporary music  
Saturday night service  
Sunday night service  
Better music  
Different music  
Praise music – just a little  
Men's group, like the Presbyterians  
Music – definitely  
Lively, upbeat music  
Get Episcopalians to support their church financially as much as Baptists do  
Senior citizens club  
Few verses of songs  
Don't let church go longer than an hour  
St. Johns is just fine the way it is  
Diversified music  
More contemporary liturgy

You can choose to write about these questions, or just think about them and come prepared to discuss.

## APPENDIX D

### Survey Monkey Online Evaluation

(Ten participants responded)

1. *“I learned things I didn’t know before about...”* (check all that apply)  
 100% responded that they had learned something about all the following topics.

- ☐ Tinicum Island
  - ☐ St. John’s Church
  - ☐ Episcopal Diocese of PA
  - ☐ Episcopal Church USA
  - ☐ Church History
  - ☐ How the Bible was formed
  - ☐ What other denominations believe about the Bible
  - ☐ What Christianity has in common with other religions
- “One or two things I learned were  
 \_\_\_\_\_.”

2. *“What I liked about Imani was....”*

Please rate the individual elements of the course by how much you enjoyed them.

	I liked it a lot	I liked it	It was OK	Didn’t like it
Eating together	80%	20%		
Presentations	70%	20%	10%	
Group discussions	40%	40%	20%	
Videos and audio clips	80%	20%	60%	
Homework	10%	30%		
Timeline project	60%	30%	10%	
Field trip	60%	30%	10 % ( didn’t go)	
Being with friends	40%	40%	20%	
Meeting new people	20%	50%	30%	



3. “For future Imani courses, I recommend

	<i>more</i>	<i>fewer</i>	<i>the same number of...</i>
Presentations	30%	10%	60%
Group discussions	40%	20%	40%
Audio visual materials	70%	—	30%
Homework	20%	50%	30%
Field trips	60%	—	40%
Participants	50%	—	50%
Guest speakers	60%	10%	30%
Sessions	20%	20%	60%

4. Indicate your agreement/disagreement with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Imani made a difference how I understand my faith	80%	20%		
Imani made a difference how I understand others’ faith	20%	70%	10%	
Everyone in the church would benefit from Imani.	60%	40%		
I enjoyed Imani, but it’s not likely to change me, or St. John’s.	20%	40%	40%	
I have more hope for the future of St. John’s since taking Imani.	30%	50%	20%	
I want to continue to visit/learn about other churches and faiths.	50%	50%		
Imani made me appreciate St. John’s Church more.	70%	30%		
Imani made me feel more connected to other people of faith	50%	40%	10%	

5. *“In general, I think...”*

Please rate the following statements as True or False.

	True	False
The presenters were well prepared.	100%	___
The presenters tried to cover too much material each session.	30%	70%
The presenters had an ‘agenda’.	___	100%
Imani is not much different from a catechism course.	20%	80%
It’s important to learn about the broader Church.	100%	___
It’s important to learn about other religions.	90%	10%
I would recommend the Imani course to other church members.	100%	___
I would recommend the Imani course to non-members.	100%	___
I would recommend the Imani course to other congregations.	100%	___
Imani is a good way to introduce new ideas to the church.	90%	10%

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